

GNVQ

**This Examiners' report relates to mark scheme
Publication code: G012647**

Examiners' Reports

GNVQ Foundation

Performing Arts

Summer 2002

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Chief Examiner's Report

There was a very small entry for all papers at this level and so it is difficult to draw general conclusions or rely on statistical evidence.

John Turton
Chief Examiner
August 2002

Unit P101T – Opportunities in Performing Arts

There has been some debate about whether this paper should have pre-release material. There were sound educational reasons for not doing this but there may be a point at which this can be revisited. However, for the time being the current format will continue.

In general, candidates performed slightly less well on this occasion but there was no discernible reason for this drop in performance.

Some centres are still allowing students to choose venues that offer little scope for study and answering questions, as the performances they offer are very limited. It is recognised that some centres do not have a range of venues nearby but it is important that students are guided in their choice to study the most appropriate.

Question 1:
Describe the venue that you have chosen.

Many candidates needed to provide more detail about the stage area and the auditorium. Stating the name and saying that it is 'quite big' is not sufficient for high marks.

Question 2:
Think about the people who work at this venue. Choose one whose work can be seen by the audience during a performance.

What is their job called and what do they do?

Some students had a strange idea of which work could be seen during the performance. Obviously the intention was to give a wide choice among technical and production roles. Some weaker students even had difficulty identifying a correct job title.

Question 3:
Your chosen venue will have people who look after the audiences' needs. Choose one of these people.

What is their job called and what do they do?

The intention here was to encourage students to write about a front-of-house function and this question was generally well answered. Again a few students could not even identify an appropriate job.

Question 4:

How do local people find out about performances that take place at your chosen venue? Describe at least two ways.

Again some good answers were given but a significant proportion lacked the level of detail that would get higher marks. More thought about the range of advertising used would have been helpful.

Question 5:

How does the performance space (or spaces) in the venue affect the type of performances that can be held?

As might be expected a number of candidates struggled with this question as it requires an understanding of the effect that the space(s) available have on the type of performance. This level of analysis stretched the average student.

Question 6:

How does your chosen venue make sure that a disabled person can enjoy a visit?

This was well answered in the main and this is clearly a topic that has been covered by tutors and also during visits to the centre. The best candidates ought to be able to go beyond the basic facilities provided to consider how the disabled person can enjoy their visit.

Question 7:

What kind of publicity could your chosen venue use to attract young people (16 – 25) to a concert by a current chart act?

Candidates related well to this question and many gave detailed answers describing a variety of publicity material that was appropriate to the target audience.

Question 8:

What kind of audience would go to see performances at your chosen venue?

Different people might go to different events and you must write about why this is.

Many students were not able to go beyond very basic audience types – young people, old people – and the answers given were very generic for a venue. They often did not recognise that a venue may have different target audiences for different parts of their programme.

Question 9:
What helps to make your venue successful?

This question was designed to enable the candidates to show how they could apply their knowledge to analyse the success of the venue. It was not surprising that some students struggled to do this but a significant minority was able to achieve a reasonable score on this question.

Unit P104T – Working on a Team Event

This unit is about working on an event as an organiser and planner. However a significant number of centres simply allowed students to write about a performance that they took part in. There was a great deal of detail about learning lines, making props, etc which is not relevant to this unit.

If students are not able to plan and run an event then it would be better for centres to consider offering unit 5 as an alternative, as it is difficult for students to gain credit solely from the type of work described above.

There is a wide range of approaches to the production of pre-release material. Some centres appear to give little or no support and student work gives little indication that it has been developed over six weeks. Other centres appear to tell students exactly what to do and it is sometimes difficult to discern an individual student's contribution. Students need support and guidance but should be allowed to develop their own ideas.

Pre-release material

The use of a booklet for the answers is intended to allow students to distil the information that they have as a result of their work on planning an actual event. This event may have taken place prior to the issue of the pre-release information but should not be a simulation.

Chose an event that you have worked as part of a team.

On this page write about what you did as an individual before the event, during the event, and after the event.

While most students gave a good account of the planning process they failed to cover the three elements of the question – before, during and after – in consequence only a proportion of the total marks were available to them. Where the only contribution that a candidate had made was in performance their answer was very limited.

While you were working on the event what health and safety guidelines did you need to follow?

Some candidates gave a list of bullet points while others produced a detailed response to the question. Again those candidates who had a limited contribution to the overall event struggled to go beyond the concepts of a warm-up and taping down wires.

How did your team communicate with each other while you were working on the event?

Once again the students who did best on this question were those who had an active role in organising the event. They were able to refer to meetings held, record keeping, and the day-to-day interaction of the team.

What written records did you keep while you were planning the event?

Many students only offered a basic answer to this question, again partly through the lack of opportunity given to them in the planning stages of the event in which they were taking part. There was a need to show how good records support the planning and successful execution of an event.

Test Paper

Question 1:

(a) Think about somebody else in your team. Write about the main things that they did.

(b) How did their work help towards the success of the event?

Many candidates answered this well and had clearly noticed the contributions made by others in their group. Indeed many were generous and realistic in recognising the important contribution made by another student to the success of the event.

Question 2:

You followed Health and Safety guidelines during your work. Why were these important?

A significant number of students simply listed again the regulations that they had followed. There was often no attempt to list the reasons for the importance of this in a potentially dangerous industry. Some candidates were again hampered by the narrow role they had undertaken in the project.

Question 3:

How did your team's communication help the success of the event?

Most candidates could only attempt this question at a very basic level possibly because communication had been at a basic level throughout the project. Many students also interpreted communication in a very narrow way.

Question 4:

(a) What problems did you have when you were working before the event?

(b) How did you solve these problems?

Those students who had merely had a performance role could only write about learning lines and the lack of attendance by others. If they are to be believed working with this cohort must be extremely difficult and frustrating! Many of the responses to (b) were theoretical rather than what had actually happened. E.g. "If we did this again I would learn my lines earlier."

What would you change to improve your work on any future events?

This was not well answered. Students struggled to analyse the problems they had and to find ways in which they could be overcome. Some answers were similar to those for 4(b). For one last time the narrowness of role hampered many students in their ability to give a wide-ranging answer.

Unit P105T – Promoting an Event

As for unit P105T, there is a wide range of approaches to the production of pre-release material. Some centres appear to give little or no support and student work gives little indication that it has been developed over six weeks. Other centres appear to tell students exactly what to do and it is sometimes difficult to discern an individual student's contribution. Students need support and guidance but should be allowed to develop their own ideas.

Pre-release

You have been asked to promote a 'Battle of the Bands' evening that will let local bands compete for a prize. You will need to think about how you will promote the event so that bands will enter and also so that you get a good audience.

On this page write about how you will promote the event to the bands that you want to enter.

A small number of students concentrated on the ways in which they would attract an audience rather than how they will persuade bands to enter. This naturally affected the marks that were available to them.

The majority of students had answered well and had given thought to where bands were to be found and how material could be given to them.

On this page design a poster that will attract an audience to the event.

If you wish you may attach a sheet of A4 paper with your design on it.

Again a few students did not read the question and targeted their poster at the bands rather than an audience. However there were some very good and original posters and a significant number of students showed a good grasp of DTP skills.

Some posters could not receive high marks because a vital piece of information was missing (e.g. time or venue details)

Show your poster to four people from the target audience and find out what they think about it.

On this page write down what they like and what they do not like about your poster.

The main problem with answers to this section was a lack of detail. Some students did report comments at length and a number set out their answer clearly using a tabular format.

Some students did not ask four people but the majority had done so.

Test Paper

In a significant number of cases candidates failed to relate their answers to the information that they had in their pre-release booklets. This obviously caused them problems in finding appropriate answers.

Question 1:

On page one of your pre-release booklet you wrote about how you would get bands to enter the competition. Which part of your plan is the most important? Why do you think this?

The first part of this question was well answered in most cases. The majority of candidates could identify the most important parts of their plan but were unable to continue to the second part and give reasons for their choice.

Question 2:

(a) Look at your poster. Why did you choose the images (pictures) that you used?

(b) What information had to be included to make your poster successful?

The intention of this pair of questions was to ensure that the students understood the general principles behind the design of the poster that they had produced.

The questions were mainly covered at a satisfactory level with some detail and a limited justification given.

Question 3:

Using the information that you collated from your audience, what changes would you make to your poster to improve its appeal?

Candidates mostly did relate the audience's comments to their poster. The majority applied them very literally and only a very few were able to recognise how positive comments could be used to improve the poster.

A small minority showed a degree of arrogance in believing that the comments were not really fair and that their poster was brilliant already!

Question 4:

As well as your poster, how else could you promote your event to your target audience?

A significant number of candidates struggled with this question. Some simply gave a list of locations where they could put their posters. Others were unrealistic in relating the scale of the event with the possibility of, for example, buying television advertising.

Grade Boundaries

Unit No		Distinction	Merit	Pass	N
P101T	Upper	100	66	48	31
	Lower	67	49	32	15
	Cum%cands	3.9	13	42.9	90.9
P104T	Upper	100	63	47	31
	Lower	64	48	32	16
	Cum%cands	1.3	14.7	50.7	96
P105T	Upper	100	67	50	34
	Lower	68	51	35	19
	Cum%cands	4.3	31.9	78.3	94.2

Chief Moderator's Report for GNVQ and VCE Performing Arts

Let us start with the good news – the vast majority of centres submitted work that was within tolerance and relatively easy to moderate. The statistics show that, overall, 71% of courses fell within tolerance, 21% had some problem units, while only 1% had all units outside the limits set by the code of practice. However a further 7% could not be moderated – sometimes because the work was submitted very late or in a form that made it impossible to follow what the student had achieved. Naturally these last two categories are of great concern to the moderation team.

All levels

Moderators commented that much of the work submitted was creative, interesting and of a good standard. At its best it was excellent and showed evidence of hard work and dedication by both students and staff alike. However in a small number of cases it was let down by seemingly basic errors in what was presented for moderation.

Once again, many of the problems experienced arose from a failure of student work to meet all the requirements of the banner or task bar. There are still situations where, for example, the number of tutor observations does not match that required by the unit. This means that the work can only be graded as 'U'. This seems to be a basic problem that should be spotted by internal assessors/verifiers and put right before the work is submitted.

It is appreciated that each centre is unique and has its own way of delivering the course and we do not want to prevent this range, but it is important that reference is made to the assessment grid when planning the delivery and work, to ensure that the students can pass the unit and achieve higher grades where appropriate.

One particular point to bear in mind is that no matter how much you want to integrate units, three-quarters of them must be completed by the deadline at the end of May. Where units are integrated, the evidence should be separated so that there is a clear body of evidence in the portfolio for each unit. In other words the moderator cannot search through an entire portfolio to find evidence for one unit that is embedded in another one. Bear in mind that you may not have submitted an entire portfolio for an individual student, so the evidence may not even be available.

The majority of centres presented their work in the requested format suitably and clearly annotated. Please try to remember that the moderator does not know your students and cannot identify individuals in a group piece without your help.

The moderator does not have access to music software so we do need an audio copy on CD or minidisk. Many centres have been able to use a digital camera this

year and this has helped greatly with picture quality. Please remember to transfer this to VHS so that the moderator can access it.

It is helpful to the assessor, as well as the external moderator, if the work is annotated to make it clear where there is evidence to match particular points in the banner and the criteria for the various grades. You can do this easily either by ticking boxes on a sheet at the front of the unit portfolio or by writing in the margin of the students' work.

The skills units are still causing problems across all levels. These seem to arise because centres are delivering the course in a fixed way and do not see the need to evidence these units separately. It is appreciated that skills are often developed through work in other units and that is not a problem. However, the appropriate records must be kept to provide evidence for the skills unit. Student logbooks need to record what a student has done and what skills they have learned, not simply be a 'dear diary' document.

Some centres are providing student logbooks with spaces for the requisite information to be inserted by both tutor and student. This means that vital information cannot be overlooked when the unit is being completed.

Foundation

At this level 59% of courses were within tolerance, 23% were partly out, 9% were completely out and 9% could not be moderated.

Nearly all courses offered units 6 and 8 as their options as these are more directly performance related. Some good, often demanding, performance work was evidenced.

Units 3 and 5 have a criterion that requires the student to show that they followed health and safety guidelines. This needs firmer evidence to be presented. Everybody in this industry, regardless of their role, needs to be aware of the inherent dangers. Appropriate evidence should be provided to prove that the necessary guidelines have been followed.

Intermediate

At Intermediate level 73% of courses were within tolerance, 10% were partly out, 4% completely out and 13% could not be moderated. There are a small but significant minority who have major problems and should, perhaps, be looking to obtaining support from INSET or having a senior moderator visit to give guidance.

Again, the evidence provided for health and safety was weak, particularly where technical units were being offered. While at this level detailed knowledge of, for example, electrical regulations is not required, a basic understanding of the issues

should be demonstrated. There was little evidence of basic risk assessments having been carried out.

It is interesting that unit 7 was rarely offered, and yet this is probably the area where there are the most employment opportunities in the industry.

Again the importance of the banner needs to be emphasised. Some units do require a number of performances to be recorded – check to make sure that you have submitted the correct number. Do not forget that the performance for unit 3 cannot be used for other units and vice versa.

VCE

At VCE, 66% fell within tolerance, 24% were partly within, 3% were totally out of tolerance and 7% could not be moderated. Across the whole qualification 89.8% of candidates passed the single award and 90.6% the double award.

Much of the work submitted was satisfactory, though it is important to realise that to achieve the highest grades, work needs to be substantial and excellent. Most optional units do require primary evidence to be submitted, and it is vital that the required amount is included. A further reminder that moderators have access to a limited range of formats that does not include software.

It is also important to note that a performance can only be used for one unit, so the two performances for unit 5 cannot be credited towards an optional unit.

Again, at this level, Health and Safety issues were not covered as explicitly as they might have been. It is particularly important in some of the technical units that students show that they can work safely at height, or with electricity, to give just two examples. There was often little evidence that the students understood electrical loading, phases, current etc. This is a requirement of the lighting and sound unit.

The Front of House and Stage Management units also require a good knowledge of health and safety, but were often presented with the sketchiest of evidence. This clearly prevents a student receiving the higher grades.

The Theatre Design unit caused a few problems. There is a requirement to submit artefacts that are bulky and difficult to transport. Photographs or video would perhaps be more appropriate. However a lighting plan or ground plan is not sufficient without further evidence of the design elements.

Students need to show how their part of the design process contributed to the realisation on stage.

For future series of moderation

Work from the assessment grid when you are writing assignments and ensure that students cover everything thoroughly.

An effective way of marking work under this system is to annotate the margins to show where you believe that a particular criterion has been covered.

Please submit work only in the formats specified – VHS for video and Minidisc or CD for audio.

Present each unit in a separate section of the portfolio and do not cross-reference from unit to unit or student to student.

Try to keep portfolios as light as possible. Leave out some of the irrelevant pages from the Internet or the notes that you have given to students. Lever Arch files are heavy and bulky – expensive for you to send - difficult for us to deal with. Plastic pockets increase the weight of work by a significant factor.

Do not add extra material like dance certificates or medals to make the portfolio look more impressive. The moderator will not take them into account and there is always a risk that they might get lost.

Make sure internal assessment/verification is rigorous and takes place just before portfolios are submitted for external moderation. Double check at this stage that the sample to be submitted matches the requirements that have been sent to your exams officer.

Much of this will not apply to many centres, but, if you have had problems, please do try to get to some INSET or ask for a visit so that you can discuss your individual difficulties with a senior moderator.

Please remember that we want your students to achieve where their work is at a satisfactory standard – make sure they don't fail on a technicality.

John Turton
Chief Moderator
August 2002