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# **EXAMINERS' REPORTS**

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**LEVEL 1 / LEVEL 2 VOCATIONAL AWARD  
IN PERFORMING ARTS (TECHNICAL  
AWARD)**

**JANUARY 2024**

Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at:  
<https://services.portal.wjec.co.uk/MarkToUMS/default.aspx?l=en>

### **Online Results Analysis**

WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC portal (formally known as secure website). This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.

### **Annual Statistical Report**

The annual Statistical Report (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Page</b>
Unit 1 Performing	1
Unit 2 Creating	5

## **LEVEL 1/2 VOCATIONAL AWARD IN PERFORMING ARTS (TECHNICAL AWARD)**

**January 2024**

### **UNIT 1 PERFORMING**

#### **General Comments**

In this second series of the qualification, more centres had opted to submit Unit 1 work and it was pleasing to see a range of approaches to the Unit. In most cases, centres had supported candidates to select repertoire which suited their skills and interests. Where candidates achieved well it was clear that they had chosen and taken ownership in the preparation of their final outcome.

The majority of disciplines seen by moderators in this series were in the Acting and Music pathways, although the Musical Theatre submissions are increasing as is Music Technology.

It was clear that centres are becoming more confident in delivering Music Technology. However, it needs to be clear through a candidate's portfolio how they have researched and prepared for development of the final presentation. Candidates need to be able to demonstrate what aspects of the presentation (performance) they have prepared and how they have used the technology to create their performance. They also need to explicitly acknowledge where they have used tracks from others.

For Musical Theatre submissions, centres are reminded that there needs to be evidence of at least two of the different disciplines (acting, singing, dancing) although these do not need to be of equal weighting, they just need to be present. Candidates should not be choreographing their own routines as this unit is about how they can effectively perform the work of others. It is permissible for teachers to choreograph a routine utilising the appropriate style from the relevant musical and then teach that to candidates.

The majority of centres ensured that candidates were able to research, prepare, present and then reflect on their presentations in relation to the set brief. This enabled candidates to consider the purpose of their performance. Although the brief for Unit 1 is purposely wide enough to allow for range of repertoire, centres need to ensure that they are encouraging candidates to respond to the brief in their performance. Good examples of practice in this aspect included where candidates had considered the requirements of the festival when selecting their repertoire – e.g. a focus on family friendly, or consideration of diversity in choice of material.

Approaches to this unit continue to vary, with a mix of solo and ensemble performances. Where candidates perform in a group, centres are reminded of the importance of clear candidate introductions. This can be recorded before or after the actual performance or as a minimum then annotated screenshots or candidate photos should be included within the evidence.

#### **Administration**

It was encouraging to see evidence presented in a variety of different formats. With centres supporting candidates with the opportunity to engage in interviews and vlogs to evidence the preparation of their presentation.

Where centres followed the guidance for uploading work, moderation was seamless. Centres should familiarise themselves with the Surpass Upload Guidance ([WJEC/Eduqas](#)), which will support their workload as well as enhance the moderation process. This guide will shortly be updated for Summer 2024 with Unit 3 being added.

The majority of centres have included clear identification of candidates to aid the moderation process. Where centres had staged the presentations as an audition, with candidates presenting themselves and what they intended to present, the identification was seamless.

Where centres completed the assessment sheets fully, the moderation process was fully supported as the teacher assessor stated the rationale for the given marks.

### **Task 1a and 1b**

***Outline the findings of the research you have undertaken for your chosen piece(s). Discuss how this research will influence your performance and what impact you are hoping to achieve.***

In the main this has been done well, with candidates providing evidence that is relevant to their chosen repertoire. Features of high-level responses demonstrated in depth research and included responses to all the bullet points in the mark scheme. The most successful examples demonstrated how the research had an impact on candidates' own performance intention.

It is also important to remember that work should make reference to the set brief, although the brief does not change each year, candidates still need to consider how their choices are meeting the requirements of this. High level responses from candidates carefully reflected on how initial choices may not be suitable for the brief or may need to be adapted. An example of this is where candidates may have been considering a big musical number but recognised that since this is a community festival, performance space may be restricted or equipment may not be readily available, so they adapted their interpretation of the piece. High level responses also considered other factors of the festival such as whether their piece is suitable for an audience of families and considerations they have made, for example changing an accent to make it relevant for a local audience or editing language to make it family friendly.

Scaffolds can be used to support candidates, but these should be as open as possible to allow for personal responses. The best use of these were where centres had used the bullet points from the mark scheme as headings.

### **Task 2**

***Outline a rehearsal schedule that will enable you to be fully prepared for the performance required in the brief.***

The purpose of this task is to ensure that candidates are aware of the processes of taking a piece of repertoire (Musical Theatre, Drama, Music or Music Technology) and realising this for performance. Where candidates were most successful, they were able to demonstrate a comprehensive schedule which demonstrated effective time management.

High level responses included understanding of the different types of rehearsals and key stages within the process. For example, initial read through/walk throughs; when blocking would be explored; individual rehearsals, rehearsals with an accompanist or backing track; technical and dress rehearsals and so forth.

Some candidates presented their knowledge of rehearsal types as in depth research, with definitions of each. For the range of marks available for this task, there is no need for candidates to include this much detail, but to achieve the top mark, they should be able to show in their schedule that they have included different types of rehearsals, rather than just a generic 'rehearse' statement.

Where candidates are working in groups, inevitably there may be similarity. But evidence must be created independently within the controlled assessment period. The response must therefore be personal and should also include anything they will schedule away from group sessions, for example character development, learning lines, technique sessions etc.

### **Task 3**

***Produce a reflective journal that records the practical rehearsal process required to ensure you are fully prepared for the performance required in the brief.***

The reflective journal is an opportunity for candidates to clarify the journey their presentation has taken from paper to final performance. Candidates should be identifying the process of the developmental journey. It should follow the initial schedule outlined in Task 2, however, as creative professionals are aware, initial plans are often amended. There is an opportunity for candidates to explain why the initial schedule has had to be altered – this is often in response to actions not in their control.

Where candidates were most successful, they were able to explain how they have explored the elements and devices of their discipline in the creation of the performance. For example, included annotated diagrams of blocking, how they have explored canon, dynamics, proxemics and articulation. They have also commented on how they have developed fluency in their performance, worked on accuracy and enhanced the expressive qualities. They have also demonstrated the ability to reflect on feedback and the actions they have then taken to improve their piece of work. High attaining candidates have also included annotated scripts, choreography notes or musical scores to demonstrate what they have focused on and how they have used rehearsal skills to overcome specific problems.

The accurate use of subject specific vocabulary was evident in the most successful work and demonstrated candidates' understanding of professional working practice and the key features of their chosen discipline.

### **Task 4**

***Perform / present your chosen piece(s) to an audience.***

It was a pleasure to be able to observe the talent of candidates and the final products of the work they had prepared. As with Summer 2023, centres are reminded that performance is at the heart of this unit and the focus of all the learning that takes place. Tasks 1-3 are intended to help candidates develop a sense of ownership in the development of their performances. It is understood that centres have a variety of teaching and performance spaces available to them. To give the candidates the best performance experience an effort had been made by centres to create an authentic performance/audition space; with a formal audience, costumes that supported the character or help develop a sense of performance for a festival audition. Where candidates had been performing in a classroom environment, then in many cases there was still an attempt to create a performance space, for example by clearing chairs etc to create space, making use of screen where available.

There was a wide range of individual and group performances, with some candidates presenting a single piece of repertoire and others combining pieces to make up a portfolio of in order to meet the 3-6 minute requirement. Either of these approaches are acceptable. Centres are advised that although there are no formal penalties for being under or over time, candidates may well self-penalise if they are unable to demonstrate the skills and consistency of performance to achieve Band 5 marks.

The quality of recordings was good. Centres should consider the placement of the recording equipment. If too far from the candidates, then the recording may not capture the nuances of facial expressions and the intricacy of footwork or the control of a musical instrument. Ideally, the recording device will be situated to capture the keyboard of the piano and both hands on the guitar, the performer should not be masked by the music stand. Care should be taken with the lighting used in performance to ensure that this does not interfere with the quality of recording. Centres are able to make use of pan and zoom on the recording equipment if required.

Centres are reminded that as this is a performance unit work should be video recorded for submission, unless creating a Music Technology outcome, in which case it can be presented as an audio recording.

### **Task 5**

***Evaluate the success of your performance including what you have learned from undertaking this work and how it will inform your future performances.***

Reflecting on a performance and analysing the success in respect of a given brief is an integral part of the creative arts industry. Candidates should be able to reflect on their strengths and areas for future development, to do this they need to receive comprehensive feedback from the audience of their audition/presentation. Successful submissions reflected on feedback, linked this with their self-reflections to determine their strengths and where they needed to further develop their practice. Their in-depth analysis made use of the elements and devices of the discipline to create a justified evaluation of the success of their performance. Less successful submissions were descriptive accounts of what candidates had performed, without commenting on its success against the requirements of the brief. They often lacked a balance between analysis and in depth evaluation.

As with other tasks, evidence for this task can be presented using a variety of methods, including prose, a vlog or an interview. Prompts are allowed and may support candidates to fulfil the requirements of the task. Some candidates presented a hybrid portfolio of prose, video evidence and annotated screenshots or photos.

### **Summary of Key Points:**

- The most successful candidates, regardless of final outcome, were able to demonstrate an ownership over the decision of what to perform, the creation of a reflective log that explained the journey of the rehearsal process and in the evaluation of their final performance.
- Where candidates are given scaffolding, care must be taken not to inhibit high-level achievers by asking closed questions. Open questions or sentence starters may be useful in this type of scaffold.
- Templates are allowed but take note of the previous point. There were examples of tables with boxes left blank or where copy and paste had been applied. Whilst this has a positive visual impact, it is often time consuming and does not enable a candidate to flourish.
- Candidates should be encouraged to consider professional working practices throughout their portfolio of evidence and relate the purpose of their performance to the brief given.
- Support candidates to consider what they research and the purpose of the research, which is to influence the development of their final performance.

## **LEVEL 1/2 VOCATIONAL AWARD IN PERFORMING ARTS (TECHNICAL AWARD)**

**January 2024**

### **UNIT 2 CREATING**

#### **General Comments**

Unit 2 is the Creating Unit. Candidates must create original work in response to the published brief.

Unit 2 enables candidates to gain, develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the skills and techniques needed to create and refine original work in the performing arts. This unit can be completed through a performance discipline or a production discipline.

Creatives work in a huge range of different disciplines and environments, sometimes as individuals and sometimes as part of a team. They may work to a brief of their own design or create something to a commissioned brief from someone else, that is why it is imperative that all the work created by the candidates should always be focused on the brief. The brief should be at the core of every task, underpinning every creative decision to allow a sense of journey to a final creative product. The brief should enable all candidates to have a clear vision of what they are creating.

In some instances, candidates had an outcome that was of a good standard, but their logbooks did not always reflect this journey. It is important to remember that candidates should be encouraged to be as creative as they wish in response to the set brief, but they need to be able to demonstrate throughout the process how they have arrived at their final outcome.

Candidates need to be taught how to write a melody, how to create dialogue, how lighting can be used to create particular effects etc. as appropriate to their chosen discipline. This can be achieved through looking at how other practitioners have worked and comparing techniques, as well as by giving candidates short exercises to complete. Developing these skills before starting the controlled assessment supports candidates to ensure that Task 1 is about how their skills will be used to create an outcome.

There was a variety of approaches to this unit from individual composition tasks to ensemble devised drama, it was pleasing to see a range of performance and production disciplines being presented.

Overall, the performance candidates showed their discipline well, but there was still a general lack of skill developed in the production disciplines. The focus needs to be on how the production discipline was used in the creating of the outcome.

#### **Administration**

When submitting the work for moderation many centres uploaded evidence as Zip files, as outlined in the upload guidance. This was generally agreed as good practice as the moderators could easily access all the work. Centres are reminded of the importance of including all work for the sampled candidates, along with completed and signed administration forms.

There was a variety of applications used to record the work submitted from PDF/PowerPoints/Word – all of which worked well. You may choose the best application that fits the need of the tasks and the candidates.

When submitting videos of group performances, it is vital that an identification of the candidates is clear. This can be done verbally at the start of the recording or a screen shot clearly identifying the candidates.

On the whole teacher comments were excellent and gave clear justifications to the marks awarded and greatly aided moderation.

### **Task 1**

***Outline the components that you considered when writing your creative brief.***

Research to support the outcome should be the focus of this task. It should be the foundation of candidates' creating, so that they can hang their idea to something solid. Allow them to use some Blue Sky thinking and be creative.

The piece of work can be in any appropriate format but should start with a statement of what the candidate intends to create, before adding the information required. Where the work was successful, candidates had a good awareness of the intended purpose and effect of their created piece. It was focused on **why** the outcome would be fit for purpose and had clear research to support that understanding.

There was a better understanding this series of what the production candidates intended to do. Again, performance candidates had a better grasp of what this task required. In Task 1 production candidates should focus on how their skill will be used to create their outcome. By outlining in Task 1 what discipline specific skills they will need, the Task 2 journey becomes a record of what and how things were created based on the skills outlined here.

There were good connections to the candidates' understanding of the scale of their creative work. All disciplines showed an understanding of the number of performers, or the equipment/instruments needed to produce their outcome for Task 3, but there is still a lack of practitioner research seen in many tasks which links to the final outcome.

Successful responses included focused practitioner research which demonstrated how they might apply this to their own ideas and development of work. Some candidates presented lengthy documents outlining biographies of their chosen practitioners. Centres are advised that this depth of detail is not required, what is important is that candidates are able to demonstrate their understanding of the work/style of the practitioner by considering how this might be relevant to their own work. As ideas change throughout the process, candidates may become less influenced by these practitioners, this is fine and they do not need to redo this part of the task in that case, Task 2 will likely document how and why this has been the case.

### **Task 2 – To be completed alongside preparing for Task 3**

***Produce a development log that records the exploration and development of your ideas in response to a creative brief.***

The evidence was presented in a variety of ways. Some centres opted for a word documents with many others using PowerPoint. Where candidates included videos of the process this supported their demonstration of how the work was being developed. Many centres embedded the videos or sound tracks into PowerPoint, this aided moderation and enabled candidates to respond to the work in the same place.



There was evidence of clear feedback and how this influenced the work created by the candidates. Where the work was most successful, candidates had a real sense of ownership and a clear understanding of the brief. The brief and their idea that came from it framed every decision – and these were a pleasure to read. It should contain evidence which shows how the candidates have explored the relevant ideas and techniques as appropriate to the piece they are creating. High level responses considered problems encountered and what the candidates had tried out in order to overcome these, they then reflected on whether this was successful.

High level responses included clear reference to subject specific vocabulary and candidates were able to demonstrate their understanding. There is no set number of logs required for this task, but candidates do need to be able to demonstrate the development throughout the whole process, so one or two responses is unlikely to meet all of the requirements in the highest level of the mark bands. Centres are reminded that the milestone recordings submitted support this task, not replace it.

Where candidates have worked in groups it is crucial in this task that they make clear references to what they have contributed, this is their opportunity to demonstrate what they understand and their ideas, even if they end up not being used in the final outcome.

### **Task 3**

***Present your final piece(s) to an audience.***

This is where the actual created piece is assessed. There are various discipline specific criteria laid out in the marking scheme.

For assessment purposes Task 3 is identified as being just the presentation of the completed piece (or pieces) of work, but of course this is the culmination of the work done in actually creating the piece of work they will present.

Although this is the outcome there does need to be a sense of evaluation. Many centres did not record any feedback for this task. It is best practice where possible that the candidate has the opportunity to share what they have created with an audience, and for that audience to give constructive feedback. There is no requirement for the actual feedback to be filmed.

The assessment here is not focused on whether the candidate has managed to perform or present their piece perfectly, although this will aid in communicating the nuances of each discipline, it's whether the creative skills or methods have been employed *in the creation* and are evidenced in the presentation. Many candidates introduced themselves at the start of their presentations explaining why and how they had created their piece.

Production candidates should be presenting their ideas and outcome if produced. Centres are reminded that production candidates can either design for a group within the centre if appropriate, or create new designs for an existing piece of work which meets the requirements of the set brief. Where candidates have designed for a group and this has been realised in performance, then including the recording of performers wearing the costume etc is useful.

It is very important that all candidates can be identified. This is their chance to shine and share their outcome so clear identification is vital.

### **Task 4**

***Evaluate the success of your creative process and final creation. Discuss the areas of your work that need improving / developing and explain how you would make the improvements or justify why particular feedback has not been acted upon.***

This task can be a written piece of work, or in any other format which is appropriate to the candidate. Many candidates did well in this task explaining how the feedback given during the whole process helped them. Successful responses commented on how effective or not feedback had been and how they developed their work accordingly. It can be difficult to write about how you could improve something which was really successful, so candidates need to be aspirational and consider what they could do if they had much bigger/better resources available, professional actors/dancers/musicians as performers, a fully equipped theatre with the best lighting/sound rig and a team of technicians, much more time etc.

Many gave good examples of how successful the outcome met the brief – but where this was not clear candidates struggled to evaluate effectively. Production candidates did not always focus on their skill enough. They need to demonstrate how their skill had developed during the process. It may be helpful to refer to the discipline specific lists of points which appear at the top of the criteria for Tasks 2 and 3.

The most successful candidates were reflective and could see why their work was suitable or not. They showed this through their understating of their skill. This part of the evaluation process was a success for the highest achieving candidates.

This does not need to be written as an essay. Candidates can add images or screen shots to support their knowledge and help them explain their point. Overall, the evaluation task did give evidence of what was being created, but there is a need for candidates to focus on how their skills helped them be creative.

### **Summary of Key Points**

Key points for centres to consider for future series:

- Centres are reminded that the Unit 2 brief changes each September, they must be making sure that the correct brief is used.
- Candidates must be able to evidence how their ideas have developed in response to the brief.
- Research is the key to Tasks 1 and 2. It will allow candidates to focus on why their outcome is suitable for the brief and their target audience.
- More reference is needed to professional practice – and again this will allow candidates to focus on their skill and the brief.
- All candidates must be clearly identified if a video is submitted.
- Work uploaded as Zip files is an example of good practice and does aid moderation.

### **Overall Key Points**

- Centres are reminded that the submission deadline for all units for Summer 2024 is 5<sup>th</sup> May.
- If entering candidates for the overall qualification in Summer 2024 then candidates must be entered for aggregation (cash in) in addition to the individual units. Further details can be found in section 6 of the specification.
- Centres may find it useful to sign up for our [centre networking map](#), this allows registered centres to network with each other, share resources and seek support for moderation purposes.



WJEC  
245 Western Avenue  
Cardiff CF5 2YX  
Tel No 029 2026 5000  
Fax 029 2057 5994  
E-mail: [exams@wjec.co.uk](mailto:exams@wjec.co.uk)  
website: [www.wjec.co.uk](http://www.wjec.co.uk)