

CAMBRIDGE TECHNICALS LEVEL 3 (2016)

Examiners' report

PERFORMING ARTS

05850–05853, 05876

Unit 1 January 2024 series

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

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Unit 1 series overview

As is usual for this paper, a pre-released set task was issued this series, giving a realistic vocational employment opportunity for candidates to respond to.

The employment opportunity facilitated responses that were able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding relating to the unit content, in a realistic, applied vocational context and the level of demand was comparable with all previous series.

The employment opportunity this series was to contribute to the work of 'Refurbished Arts'. Candidates were required to respond to the employment opportunity by submitting a written portfolio, a pitch to camera and an audition piece or presentation.

The employment opportunity offered candidates the option to identify a suitable performance or production role. Candidate responses should be both appropriate for their chosen performing arts discipline, and the role they identify to apply for.

The given scenario provided an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the wider context of employment in the performing arts industry and also contained a number of more specific features that a candidate should consider in their response, including aspects relating to funding, scale, purpose and type of performance repertoire.

It is hoped the following points and observations relating to successful, and less successful, candidate responses will be helpful.

This unit is focused on employment in the performing arts industry, and the employment opportunity should be seen as an advert for a performance or production job role.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fully considered the wider context for this type of employment within the performing arts industry, including the type of organisation and setting as well as features associated with the chosen role • identified an appropriate and specific role, such as performer or technician, that was suitable for their skills and experience • used a persuasive, promotional tone that would be likely to engage a potential employer in this type of organisation and setting • consistently related their performance skills, transferable employability skills and relevant experience, and progression routes to the selected role and made it clear how their skills and experience would be beneficial to this employer • informed their written response with focused and competent research practice • gave a pitch to camera that would engage the employer in terms of content and style of presentation • prepared a relevant and technically accomplished audition piece that had connection to this type of work • structured their response in a clear to follow manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gave little consideration to the features of the employment opportunity • responded without identifying a specific role • demonstrated only a basic or limited understanding of promotional intent and showed little awareness of this type of work • misunderstood, or gave incorrect information about some of the employment types or funding types or other contexts relevant to the selected role and/or given employment opportunity • simply read their written response as the basis of their pitch to camera • performed an audition piece that either lacked relevance for this employment opportunity or was not technically of an adequate standard • misunderstood the task and instead of 'applying' for this employment opportunity, proposed an event of their own.

Question 1

Refurbished Arts*

Time to take a new look!

A landmark building in the city centre has been refurbished and will now operate as an entertainment venue.

The local council is supporting the performing arts programme as part of its commitment to regeneration. The council sees this as an opportunity to create a city centre entertainment venue to bring audiences into the city during the evenings and at weekends.

The programme of events includes well-known existing repertoire as well as new and original performance work. All performing arts disciplines will be represented.

The performance spaces in the venue include a large, raised stage area as well as two studio spaces. The venue has state-of-the-art lighting and sound facilities in the main performance space.

The venue management team is looking to fill a range of performance and production roles.

Is it time to take a new look at your career opportunities? If so, don't delay, apply today!

*Refurbished Arts is a fictitious group.

With reference to one of the roles in the advertisement above, you are required to:

- 1 Prepare to pitch for one of the roles mentioned. Your preparation must include a portfolio of documentation (guide of 1500–2500 words) including:
 - introductory comments on your chosen vocational role, including its current employment conditions and promotional methods. These comments should be made with reference to the advertisement and the role applied for.
 - a report on the economic, social and cultural context of the event outlined in the advertisement.
 - the proposed materials for progression into your chosen vocational role including any ideas and adaptations that you have made to meet the specific demands of the advertisement.
 - your overall progression strategy and how this job opportunity fits into these longer-term plans.
 - references to the skills, knowledge and understanding gained as part of your learning programme.

[24 marks]

The written portfolio is an opportunity for candidates to set a wider context for their response to the employment opportunity and to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of employment opportunities in the performing arts industry. The areas of knowledge covered should be in line with the unit content.

The guide of 1500 to 2500 words is only a guide but responses mostly fitted within this. Responses that were significantly under or over the suggested word count tended to be self-limiting.

The written portfolios seen this series were mostly well organised and clear to follow. The stronger responses were informed by relevant and valid information sources, as well as having a clear and promotional tone that would be likely to engage this employer.

The research phase should include up to date and relevant information about what it is like to work in the performing arts industry, and not simply offer vague statistics (for example stating the average pay of an actor or a dancer). All information sources should be appropriately referenced. In the stronger responses, this research was analysed and synthesised and could therefore fully inform the response overall. The more successful responses used statistics that were focused and appropriate for the given employment opportunity.

When referring to skills and experience, there should be an element of selectivity and refinement, so that examples connect to the employment opportunity. More successful responses included relevant examples of performance skills (vocal, physical, and interpretive skills) but also employability skills such as teamwork, time keeping and reliability.

It is required that candidates identify a progression route, and this should be relevant to the role identified and to the skills, experience, and aspirations a candidate has. More successful responses could explain the relevance of the chosen route and had researched and could present findings relating to the requirements and potential of such a chosen path. In the most successful responses, a brief summary of the alternative routes that could be taken was offered, with justification of the selected route, for example, the pros and cons of university versus drama school.

The most successful written portfolios again this series, used performing arts terminology accurately and confidently and were clearly structured with clear citation. The written portfolio is an opportunity to provide an underpinning context for the pitch to camera and be the first of three parts of a coherent response to the employment opportunity.

Stay on task

It is crucial to stay on task. The written portfolio should not include suggestions for how a candidate will host the event or begin to spill over into an events management response. That is for Unit 2c.

Unit 1 requires a candidate to take the position of a potential applicant for the given opportunity as outlined in the given scenario.

Question 2 (a)

- 2** Pitch a response to the advertisement to the camera (maximum 10 minutes). Your pitch should include answers to the following questions [6 marks for each]:

- (a)** Why have you applied for this project?

The pitch to camera should be informed by the work undertaken relating to the written portfolio but should not simply repeat the content. The purpose is to engage the potential employer and to do this an appreciation of promotional intent should be demonstrated in the style of delivery. The pitch should focus on the chosen role and be consistently relevant to the given employment opportunity. The more successful pitches stated at the start the role they were applying for, for example musician, actor, or dancer. This is an opportunity to state (briefly) why you want the job!

Make links to existing skills and experience

The pitch should include well-chosen and relevant examples of skills and experience, rather than stating everything that a candidate has done.

Question 2 (b)

- (b)** What role are you interested in and how will this contribute to the project?

There was some confusion in several pitches relating to this section. You are not being asked to propose events and types of performances, or to offer to apply for funding or similar. You are to say what you will bring to the team in terms of your skills and experiences, in relation to the role identified in the report and stated at the start of the pitch. You could go on to state how you will be a team player, or to share your beliefs in the ethos of the company or type of project.

Choose a relevant role to focus on

The pitch should focus on one role. It is helpful if this is relevant for a candidate's skills and experience.

Question 2 (c)

- (c) How will the experience and knowledge that you have gained while on your course be relevant to this project?

This section does not require a full-blown account, unit by unit of what you have studied on your current course, but instead selected highlights that support your application. Selected examples that will help outline relevant skills and experience featured in the more successful pitches. Again, this series, the work seen was mostly successful in covering all the key points and mostly this was done in a clear and methodical way.

Be selective

Again, the pitch should include well-chosen and relevant examples of skills and experience, and not simply outline the course.

Question 2 (d)

- (d) What is your progression strategy for the next five years?

Brief, justified, and relevant were the features of how this was 'pitched' in the more successful responses. Again, the pitch is the time to convince the employer, and should show accomplished self-promotion techniques. This is an opportunity to exhibit self-promotional skills in keeping with professional practice in the performing arts industry.

Be informed

The chosen progression opportunity should be informed by relevant research. The pitch is an opportunity to make connections between current skills, experience and areas of interest and future aspirations.

Question 2 (e)

- (e) How do you think working on this project will contribute to your progression route?

[30 marks]

The more successful pitches included selected examples of skills and experience you hoped to gain if successful. Again, the best examples were those that were relevant to the selected role as well as having the feel of a fit for purpose 'application' style pitch to a potential employer.

Think ahead

The pitch is a chance to place the opportunity in the given scenario into the planned progression route for a candidate's future career plans.

Question 3

- 3** Audition/presentation piece – present an example of your work to the camera, which is relevant to the advertisement and the role applied for (maximum 5 minutes).

[6 marks]

It is a requirement for the audition/presentation to be performed directly at the end of the pitch, with a candidate moving from pitch to audition with confidence and fluency, rather than it being approached as a separate task.

This series saw a considerable number of well selected and relevant audition pieces and/or presentations however we also saw some pieces that had little or no connection to the report and pitch and felt like pieces that had been used for previous tasks. It is fine to repurpose previous audition pieces, but they must be relevant for the given employment opportunity.

There was no better or worse repertoire as such, however some pieces would be easier to picture being performed in the given performance spaces and were more in keeping with the creative purpose and likely audience. It is helpful when reasoning is given for the choice of audition piece, however this should be concise and to the point. Lengthy presentations about the work being performed are not necessary and can take away from the understanding of promotional intent and professional practice.

Technical ability, for example as an actor, musician or dancer, or as a technician, should be at a level suitable to present to an employer as part of an application for work.

Understand promotional intent

The audition, or presentation, is a chance to showcase skills and talents and should be of a standard and relevance that is likely engage the potential employer.

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