

AVCE in Performing Arts

Examination board: EDEXCEL

The Advanced VCE consists of three designated units (Units 1, 3 and 5) and a choice of three further units. There is a wide choice for these further units and the teacher's selection may change year on year depending on the interest and expertise of staff and students. The units outlined below apply to students starting the course in both 2003 and 2004 though the order in which they are undertaken may differ. EDEXCEL have planned changes for students starting in 2005 details of which will follow.

Assessment of the qualification is through one third externally set and marked work, (two examinations; see * below), and two thirds coursework or portfolio evidence that is marked by your teachers and externally moderated. A handbook outlining procedures in more detail is provided for students at the start of the course; and for each unit a detailed checklist of the assessment evidence you need is provided.

Unit 1: Investigating Performing Arts Industries*

Current employment opportunities, and the constraints and issues facing professionals working in the performing arts sector are reflected in this unit. The examination will test your understanding of different types of performing arts organisations, the range of products and venues, sources of funding, marketing, and what influences decisions when programming events.

Unit 3: Skills Development

Acquiring and developing skills in your areas of specialism are ongoing processes and the unit will begin in September and be completed at the end of the school year in July. You should choose from at least one of dance, drama, music, music technology, administration and marketing, technical and production aspects of performance. Through the year you will need to prepare thoroughly for practical sessions, work regularly to improve your skill level and learn to evaluate the progress you make. You will be assessed on your portfolio or working notebook, at least three recorded observations by your teacher and the examples you find of relevant professional practice.

Unit 5: Performing Work

This unit gives you the chance to take part in performances; you are expected to be involved both as a performer and as a member of a production team. The production for Y12 will be launched on November 2nd and be offered to the public in the middle of the Spring term 2005. Dates for the performances are scheduled for February 2nd and 3rd; the coursework deadline for this unit is Friday 11th February.

Unit 13: Devising Drama

You are here given the opportunity to develop and shape your ideas into a piece of theatre for an audience. Again it is important to be able to work as part of team but individually you will need to keep a logbook, showing your reflections and analysis of the devising process, describing your research and experimentation. The performance will be scheduled for a date to be decided in May; the coursework for this unit is due on Friday 17th June.

Unit 12: Vocal Skills

This unit offers a programme of vocal training specifically related to the use of voice in character development and the speaking of text. You will write about the principles and mechanics of voice production and apply your skills to the interpretation of different texts, creating an audio or video record of your work.

Unit 8: Preparing for Work in the Performing Arts*

Whether presenting yourself for auditions or producing portfolios of design ideas for interviews this unit will help you develop your personal repertoire of performance material or design ideas. If you have a chosen interest eg dance, expertise with sound and lighting or acting, here is your chance to specialise. You need to present a C.V., a video of yourself performing or a portfolio demonstrating your support skill. The written examination at the very end of the course asks you questions on your repertoire and on the process

Homework and Marking

You will be expected to prepare short presentations to the class and keep written records of the lessons' events and of your contribution to them. All units require substantial coursework but these will pose no threat if regular note-taking happens. When productions are in preparation, extra hours are inevitable as lines need to be learned and roles rehearsed. We encourage students to submit drafts of written coursework and provide copies of the relevant mark schemes.

Further details

Visits to theatres, either locally or in London will entail some expense. In many cases good subsidies are available for school parties but it is perhaps worth reckoning on at least £30 per year; The normal school procedures apply in cases where financial support is required. Successful candidates are those prepared to get up and try out their ideas for performance, who are curious and questioning, developing their own view of today's world. For further information please speak to Miss Dunn, Mr Gordon or Mr Wickstead.