



Questions & Answers

National 5 Drama Webinar: November 2023

Performance

Does costume for all characters refer to the extract or the whole play?

A costume candidate must design costumes for all characters in the extract being performed (a minimum of two).

In an extract of four characters where one role is significantly smaller, can the lines of that role be absorbed into the lines of another appropriate character?

Making adaptations to the original text and significantly deviating from the playwright's intentions is not recommended. If there is a smaller role within the extract, these lines could potentially be cut if it doesn't alter the meaning of the text. Alternatively, this role could be performed by a non-assessed actor, to more accurately reflect the text as it is written.

If we are doing a play which is set in Middlesbrough, do they need to perform in this accent, or can it be in their own accent?

It is always best practice for the text to be performed as it was intended by the playwright and following this guidance will more closely prepare candidates for the requirements of Higher Drama. At National 5 level, the accent used by a candidate can be their own, however, provided this is a suitable decision for the chosen text and the performance concept can be articulated and justified within the preparation for performance.

For hair and make-up, can I check what is meant by 'suitable' materials? Does this need to be stage make-up? We have an issue with funding to purchase these materials.

Make-up and hair must be applied to all characters in the performance. One full make-up and hair application must be demonstrated live to the assessor. Designs must be produced for all characters. The make-up must reflect the character requirements as illustrated in the make-up/hair designs. Suitable materials and tools must be used safely and hygienically. Make-up and hair candidates are expected to use theatrical make-up. They must have carried out a patch test at least 24 hours before application to determine if the model is allergic to the products. For hygiene purposes, lipstick and mascara must be applied with disposable applicators or the model's own can be used. Theatrical make-up can be supplemented with cosmetic make-up when a candidate wishes to achieve a particular effect, and they have taken into account the performance space and lighting conditions they are designing for.

The specific requirements for all design areas are included in the course specification:

https://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/DramaCourseSpecN5.pdf

This can be a useful document to make reference to when required to justify funding or expenditure.

What does 'one role' mean for acting? What about Bouncers or Alice, where they have to be different characters? Can we still use those texts?

Acting candidates are assessed in the interpretation and portrayal of one character. Texts such as those indicated above have traditionally been accepted too ('Teechers' being another example), where the acting candidate is portraying a character playing another character.

A minimum of six different sound effects and eight sound cues must be included. Is this for the extract being performed or the whole play?

This is a minimum requirement of a sound design candidate for the extract being performed.

For lighting, if doing a larger piece with a large number of candidates, can two lighting candidates each light half of the piece, providing they create enough cues as stated in the course specification?

No, this is not accepted. Only one lighting candidate can design for a specific group/performance. The role cannot be shared, regardless of the length of the extract.

Can multiple design candidates work on the same text, e.g one lighting, one sound designer and one hair and make-up?

Yes, though no more than one candidate can specialise in each design area for a specific group/performance. The maximum group size is 10 and can include actors and design candidates. The length of the performance should be determined by the number of actors (with an approximate recommendation of 5 minutes per acting candidate i.e four actors, four designers (lighting, sound, set, costume) would be a recommended length of 20 minutes).

Could you please clarify timings for performance?

Each performance must last a minimum of 10 minutes (for a group of two actors) and must not exceed a maximum of 50 minutes (for a group of ten actors). The duration of the performance depends on the number of candidates performing.

Question paper

What further description are you looking for beyond 'high pitched fast paced violin music'?

Would you add 'live or pre-recorded' to get the marks on the sound question?

For a full description of sound design, this answer could have been developed through reference to the specific piece of music, the style or genre of music, the volume level etc.

Specifying whether the effect was live or pre-recorded would also be additional relevant detail that would take the candidate towards a full description.

A lot of our pupils, for themes/issues, are writing 'drugs'. Is this too vague? Would it have to be 'drug misuse'?

Your suggestion here is certainly more detailed, but 'drugs' would be credited according to the marking instructions. Should the candidate write a message (i.e 'Don't take drugs'), then this wouldn't access the mark(s).