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voiceover



Issue 13

A Letter from the Head of Examinations

In July, the 2009-2010 academic year drew to a highly successful close for LAMDA Examinations, having delivered QCF supplementary awarding body recognition, geographical expansion on all continents and growth in candidate entries in the UK and overseas. We look forward to embracing more developments during the new academic year. Many of these innovations, such as centre registration, are driven by regulatory requirements. Others are part of our focus on operational improvements and customer service enhancements, such as the new design of our medals. The annual Customer Satisfaction Survey has just been evaluated and we have noted those areas where our centres and teachers feel that we can improve as well as the things that we do particularly well!

With the election of a new coalition government in the UK we are now in a climate of unprecedented change. Our regulator, Ofqual, continues to move forward with the full implementation of the assessment philosophy of the Qualifications and Credit Framework into which LAMDA qualifications are migrating.

The future role of the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA), responsible for curriculum development and assessments, is uncertain following the announcement by the Secretary of State for Education of proposed legislation to abolish it. The new government has also suspended the changes to the primary curriculum recommended in the Rose Review. It has commissioned a review of Early Years Foundation Stage which sets standards in learning and welfare for children below the age of 5 years. The review will include consideration of whether development should be formally assessed at a certain age and is expected to report in spring 2011.

The landscape of our schools is also changing, particularly since the Academies Act became law in August. So far, 142 schools (including 7 primary schools) have accepted academy status. Like academies, the new free schools (discussed on page 3) will be funded on a comparable basis to other state-funded schools. Approval has been given to just 16 schools in the first wave which will open in England next September.

During this time of dynamic change, LAMDA Examinations recognises the significant contribution made to our success by our examiners and staff and I offer them my warmest thanks. And finally, more congratulations are due to Examinations alumnus, Neil Gaiman, who added the UK's top children's literature prize to his awards when *The Graveyard Book* won the prestigious Carnegie Medal in June.

I look forward to the opportunities and challenges of the months ahead as LAMDA moves into our 150th anniversary year.



Photograph by Pascal Mollière, 2006.

Dawn Postans

Dawn Postans
October 2010

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Cover: Two young learners enjoying their Acting Duologue examination.
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Customer Satisfaction Survey 2010

LAMDA Examinations issued its annual Centre/Teacher Satisfaction Survey in June and we would like to thank everyone who took the time to complete and return it, particularly our overseas customers.

The survey looks at operational procedures, customer services and support materials such as publications and online features. It is particularly valuable as it allows us to measure the level of service that we have provided over the past academic year in relation to our Customer Service Standards and through the eyes of our customers.

As part of our commitment to offering the best customer service, LAMDA Examinations aims to:

- answer telephone calls within 6 rings / 15 seconds
- provide a courteous and accurate response to all enquiries and requests for information
- acknowledge written correspondence within 7 working days
- despatch specifications, entry forms, Public Centre date lists, fee lists and publication lists within 3 working days of receipt of a request
- despatch publications within 10 working days of receipt of the correct order
- make an initial response to complaints within 7 working days
- make available an annual fee list and Public Centre date list in an easy-to-read format to all centres in June
- provide examiners for all Public Centre dates and for Private Centres where the total amount of examination fees reaches the designated minimum order value
- despatch examination reports, medals and certificates within 6 weeks of the last day of the examination session
- despatch examination schedules 14 days in advance of the examination.

We were delighted to see that 100% of respondents who answered the question relating to Private Centre date bookings were able to secure one of their three preferred options, as this indicates that the new procedure for booking Private Centre dates is continuing to deliver excellent results for our customers.

Respondents gave positive feedback about direct contact with LAMDA Examinations staff, with 88% of respondents reporting that their call was answered within 6 rings/15 seconds and 92% saying that requested documents such as fees/entry forms were despatched within 3 working days. When contact was made by post or email, 82% believed that acknowledgement was despatched within 7 working days. Of those that responded, 59%

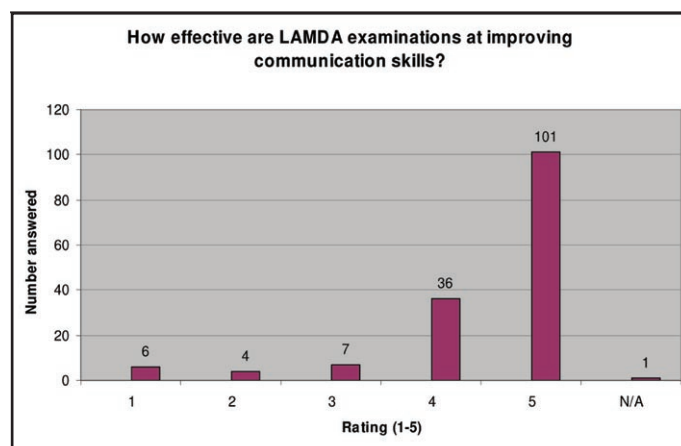
had placed a publications order over the last year and 97% of these had received their items within 10 working days.

LAMDA Examinations aims to provide a courteous and accurate response to all enquiries. For courtesy, 72% of respondents gave either 4 or 5 out of a rating of 5 (5 being the highest). For accuracy, 70% of customers marked us at either 4 or 5 out of 5.

An extremely positive development is that use of the Online Entry System (OES) has increased dramatically with 51% of respondents using this feature. 72% of those who have used it rated it as either good or excellent.

In line with our goal of success and personal achievement for all learners, we asked our customers to rate how effectively LAMDA examinations help develop learners' skills in key areas. A total of 89% of respondents rated the examinations as either very effective or extremely effective at improving communication skills and 88% rated them as either very effective or extremely effective at building confidence. We also believe it is important that learners foster an appreciation of literature, poetry and drama. 87% of respondents rated the examinations as either very effective or extremely effective at supporting this appreciation.

LAMDA Examinations is always striving to improve our ability to assist teachers, centres and learners as efficiently as possible. Please bring any issues to our attention by either writing or emailing in, or by completing an online enquiry form. Your comments will enable us to continue enhancing our service.



UK Developments

The new Department for Education signals changes in the educational landscape

In recent months, a coalition government has come into power in the UK. Some of its planned changes in policy will play a significant role in shaping the educational landscape.

The most obvious change is the reversion back to the title of Department for Education from the more recent title of Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). This change indicates that the new government is once again concentrating the Department's efforts on schools.

One of the new Department's earliest actions was to start winding down the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA). A strong focus of the Conservative party's manifesto throughout the election campaign was the abolition of governmental offices deemed to be inefficient and surplus to requirements.

Michael Gove, the new Secretary of State for Education, has proposed that from autumn 2010 the Department will introduce legislation to abolish the QCDA, although some elements of QCDA's activities will be maintained. The Department is committed to ensuring that National Curriculum Tests continue to be delivered effectively. Where the QCDA is currently involved in supporting the administration of examinations for learners, in cases such as the Diploma, these administrative functions and employees will also be retained. However, the Secretary of State for Education made it clear that according to this government's policy, it or its agencies should not be involved in this kind of work in the future, as it is 'the domain of awarding bodies.'

The Secretary of State for Education also suggested that in other areas, such as qualification development and the curriculum, the QCDA should withdraw 'as soon and as far as is practicable.' This reflects the government's intentions to cut bureaucracy in education and allow schools and teachers to teach a broader curriculum. In turn, this policy frees up awarding organisations to develop their qualifications in accordance with market demand, rather than aligning them with government mandates.

One of the more radical initiatives being introduced by the Department is the concept of free schools. Free schools are government-funded schools that can be set up by any group of proposers, which could include charities, teachers, parents, businesses or other educational groups. The belief is that the free schools will be set up in response to parental demand and

will therefore raise standards and provide an inclusive education for all learners, regardless of background.

Free schools will hold the same legal responsibilities as academies and will also benefit from the same freedoms. These freedoms include:

- the ability to set their own pay and conditions for staff
- greater control of their budget
- freedom from following the National Curriculum
- freedom to change the length of terms and school days
- freedom from local authority control.

The introduction of free schools will make the qualifications market more dynamic and will, in time, level the playing field, as schools can choose the ways in which they teach the curriculum. This could benefit awarding bodies such as LAMDA Examinations who offer vocationally-recognised qualifications (VRQs), as the new free schools may opt to meet curriculum aims through VRQs rather than general qualifications.

Early indications of potential take-up have been positive. Over 700 groups, half of which are made up of teachers, have expressed an interest in setting up a free school.

Primary Curriculum Developments

The new coalition government announced on 7 June that it did not intend to proceed with the new primary curriculum proposed in the Rose Review.

The government has decided that the National Curriculum needs to be returned to its original purpose: to present schools with a minimum national entitlement organised around subject disciplines. It is believed by ministers that this will give schools and teachers more flexibility than had been proposed by the post-Rose Review curriculum and will ensure a 'relentless focus on the basics' (www.education.gov.uk/curriculum).

The current government has chosen to extend the life of the existing National Curriculum throughout 2011/12, to allow it to develop its back-to-basics curriculum for 2012/13.

UCAS Tariff Review

On 1 July 2010, the Universities and Colleges Admissions service (UCAS) announced a comprehensive review of the UCAS Tariff, the points-based system used by learners to enter UK universities.

The main reason for reviewing the Tariff system is that it no longer fully represents the qualifications market. The Tariff was introduced 10 years ago, when A Levels were predominantly used for university entry. However, the 2009 applications indicated that this was no longer the case, with around 50% of UK applicants applying with qualifications that did not include A levels.

In addition, there is a recognition that the Tariff does not demonstrate how a particular qualification could more appropriately support admissions to some courses than others. The UCAS points score is often taken at face value, meaning that neither applicants nor Higher Education (HE) institutions gain a full understanding of the qualification's suitability.

This review marks a change in attitude towards the qualifications market as a whole. It may present an opportunity for VRQ awarding organisations such as LAMDA Examinations to achieve full recognition of the value of their qualifications at HE level, which will ultimately benefit the learner.

The process will take between 18 and 24 months and this review will therefore not affect learners applying for university in 2010 and 2011. This means that learners can still use their LAMDA examinations to gain UCAS points during this period. For further

information on the Tariff or to view fact sheets relating to this announcement, please visit www.ucas.com/he_staff/curriculumandquals/ucas-tariff.

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) Skills Consultation

BIS, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, has launched *Skills for Sustainable Growth*, a consultation on the future direction of skills policy. As part of a wider strategy to reduce the fiscal deficit and stimulate growth, BIS is looking at ways to make people more employable by giving them access to training in skills that are economically and socially useful.

Ministers have highlighted how 'the quality of our skills gives us the freedom and opportunity to obtain rewarding jobs' (*Skills for Sustainable Growth*, p.5) and therefore believe that skills and training are central to the government's strategy for sustainable growth.

The consultation is open and anyone can register a comment by visiting the BIS website, <http://interactive.bis.gov.uk/comment/skills/>. The consultation results will form the basis of the full strategy, which will be published once the Government has completed its Spending Review in October.



A broader curriculum policy may present new opportunities for LAMDA Examinations. © Martin Burton Photography

International Developments

First examination sessions

Between major airline strikes and volcanic ash shutdowns, 2010 has been a difficult year for international travellers. LAMDA Examinations has faced many organisational challenges in our overseas markets and has risen to the occasion, with the support of our examiners and schools, teachers and learners.

We are delighted that three additional new countries have held their first examination sessions this year: Austria, Bahrain and Indonesia (Bali). The sessions were a great success, with Austria focusing on the Communication subjects, Bahrain on the Performance subjects and Indonesia on both Performance and Communication.

Workshops

International workshops are a highly effective way to keep teachers up-to-date on syllabus changes, best approaches to preparing for specific examinations, and other aspects of LAMDA Examinations.

In March, two workshops were held in Guangzhou, China alongside examination sessions. The workshops were very popular, with over 200 teachers in attendance. The events focused on examinations in Speaking Verse and Prose, Using Spoken English and Reading for Performance.

In June, teachers in Singapore attended two half-day workshops following the examination session. Topics covered during the sessions included key syllabus changes, examinations in

Speaking Verse and Prose and Using Spoken English, and other examinations.

In August, a one-day workshop was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Over 60 teachers attended the workshop, which focused on Acting examinations. The teachers were eager to participate in the practical sections, and the event was a great success.

Workshops can be tailored to meet the specific needs of our overseas teachers and markets. For more information, please contact our International Officer, Olivia Evans, at olivia.evans@lamda.org.uk.

LTCC Courses

The LAMDA Teacher's Certificate in Communication (LTCC) is a non-accredited certificate specific to the overseas markets. The short certification course lasts 25 hours and is designed to help teachers who would like to gain more expertise in preparing students for LAMDA examinations. It can be especially helpful for new teachers who are eager to help students progress but who may need to learn more about teaching techniques in the subjects covered by the examinations.

In April, the LTCC course was first held in Nairobi, Kenya. The course was conducted over 6 days and was very successful.

In July, two consecutive LTCC courses were held in Hong Kong, along with two half-day workshops. The first workshop was based on the Communication examinations, focusing on speech



Bermuda shows great potential for LAMDA Examinations. Photo © iStockphoto

clarity and examinations in Reading for Performance and Public Speaking. The second workshop was based on the Performance examinations, focusing on Acting and Devising Drama. Afterwards, the LAMDA trainer commented: "Teachers were keen to ask if future courses could take the teaching up to a higher level. The two workshops were well received and I think there is a market for more of these on specific aspects of examinations."

Market visits

Dawn Postans, Head of Examinations, visited New York, Boston and Bermuda in April to meet with key stakeholders and potential schools. In spite of the best efforts of the Icelandic volcano, the visits were productive and we expect further positive developments in these markets. Bermuda has a thriving artistic community, led by events such as the decades-old Bermuda Festival of the Performing Arts. There is increasing interest in the quality and depth of training that LAMDA Examinations offers as well as in LAMDA Drama School.

Visitors from Kuwait inspired by LAMDA Examinations

In June, a group of students from The British Academy of International Arts in Kuwait came to LAMDA as part of a visit to the UK. They toured the building and met with staff from both LAMDA Examinations and the Drama School. All of these young learners had already taken LAMDA examinations. They are excited by the possibilities offered by careers in the performing arts and are keen to build on the excellent foundation that the examinations have given them.

Workshops in Pune, India for LAMDA Examinations Teachers

In April, LAMDA Examinations arranged for master classes on 'Shakespeare and His Verse' to be given in Pune, India by John Bashford, Vice-Principal of LAMDA Drama School. The workshops focused on Shakespearean verse and explored elements such as iambic pentameter, rhythm and pause. Shakespeare's figures of speech and wordplay were also discussed.

The goal of the workshops was highly practical, giving teachers the tools and activities to help students to explore the possibilities of Shakespeare's plays. John Bashford commented: "The workshop was designed to give the teachers and students an insight into how Shakespeare's language can reveal the dynamics of character and to approach the texts as an actor might as opposed to thinking of the plays as works of literature." Teachers also learned more about LAMDA's examinations in Acting and Verse and Prose, where Shakespeare is featured.

The workshops were very well attended by teachers. One attendee described the workshops as "really enlightening" while another enthused about the "simple tips that go a long way".



South African schools will benefit from LAMDA's donation of books.
Photo © iStockphoto

Charitable book donation to South Africa through Community H.E.A.R.T.

LAMDA Examinations' worldwide support of education and literacy stems mainly from its international examination sessions, teaching workshops and other activities around the globe. Occasionally, there is an opportunity to offer help in other ways as well.

Due to a once-off overstock of some of our older anthologies, LAMDA Examinations has been able to arrange a sizeable donation of books to Community H.E.A.R.T. (Health Education and Reconstruction Training). Launched in 1995, this UK-based registered charity works with local initiatives in South Africa to assist with educational endeavours and other essential areas, based on the principle of self-help.

One of Community H.E.A.R.T.'s major projects is setting up school libraries in South Africa. LAMDA Examinations' donation will mostly be sent to Gauteng province, a particularly densely populated area. The books will be a great boost for this campaign and will help to bring the educational and emotional benefits of world-class literature to these South African communities.

Product News

LAMDA Examinations gains accreditation for Entry Level Qualifications

LAMDA Examinations is pleased to announce that its suite of Graded Examinations in Communication and Performance: Entry Level qualifications has now been accredited by Ofqual. As of 1 August 2010, all our Entry qualifications in Communication and Performance are accredited as Entry 3 within the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).

Accredited Entry Level qualifications in the following subjects available from 1 August 2010 are as follows:

- Speaking Verse and Prose
- Reading for Performance
- Using Spoken English
- Acting
- Devising Drama
- Miming

Each qualification has a credit value of 4 credits.

This is an exciting development for LAMDA Examinations, as we are the first awarding organisation to offer Entry Level accredited graded qualifications in performance subjects.

More LAMDA Examinations qualifications accredited within the QCF

We are pleased to announce that we have also extended our portfolio of qualifications accredited within the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) in the following areas:

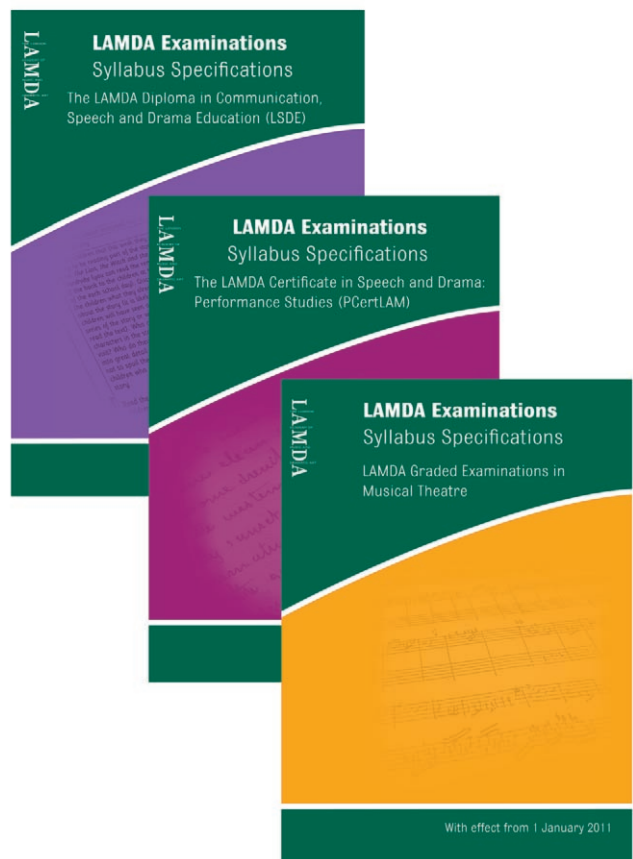
- Entry Level Award in Musical Theatre (Entry 3)
- Level 1 Award in Musical Theatre
- Level 2 Award in Musical Theatre
- Level 3 Certificate in Musical Theatre
- Level 3 Certificate in Speech and Drama: Performance Studies (PCertLAM)
- Level 5 Diploma in Communication, Speech and Drama Education (LSDE)

From 1 January 2011 you will be able to register and make learner entries on these qualifications.

These QCF qualifications will replace the existing NQF qualifications. Please note that it will not be possible to enter learners on the following NQF qualifications from 1 January 2011:

- Entry Level Musical Theatre for the Actor/Singer
- Level 1 Musical Theatre for the Actor/Singer
- Level 2 Musical Theatre for the Actor/Singer
- Level 3 Musical Theatre for the Actor/Singer
- Level 3 Certificate in Speech and Drama: Performance Studies (PCertLAM)
- Level 5 LAMDA Diploma in Speech and Drama Education (LSDE)

Important information regarding registration, learner entries and certification end dates for these NQF and QCF qualifications can be found on the LAMDA Examinations website at www.lamda.org.uk/exams/index.htm.



The syllabus specifications for the new QCF qualifications in Musical Theatre, The LAMDA Certificate in Speech and Drama: Performance Studies (PCertLAM) and the LAMDA Diploma in Communication, Speech and Drama Education (LSDE) are available from LAMDA Examinations and are now available for download from the LAMDA Examinations website. Alternatively, if you would like to order a copy please contact LAMDA Examinations at exams@lamda.org.uk.

Withdrawal of LAMDA Diploma in Dramatic Art (LDDA)

After careful consideration, LAMDA Examinations has made the decision to withdraw the LDDA from its qualifications portfolio. From 1 January 2011 the LDDA will no longer be available for new starters to register or enter on Units. Those who are currently registered and wish to complete the full qualification but have not entered for the three mandatory Units must enter for all three Units before 31 December 2010.

If you are considering taking this qualification but have not yet registered you will be required to register and enter for all three mandatory Units before 31 December 2010.

To ensure we do not disadvantage learners who will have registered and entered for all three mandatory units prior to the registration expiry date of 31 December 2010, we will be allowing a period of 2 years to complete and gain certification for the LDDA. The final certification expiry date for the LDDA will be 31 December 2012. After this date we will be unable to accept any claims for certification.

Key changes to updated syllabuses

To assist our centres and teachers in familiarizing themselves with the new syllabuses, we have prepared a summary of the key changes to the three updated QCF qualifications. Learners are required to achieve a minimum of Pass standard against each assessment criterion, in addition to achieving the pass mark.

Musical Theatre

For both Solo/Duo and Group examinations, each Grade now has its own set of assessment criteria matched against learning outcomes, to which marks are clearly linked. To further assist learners, more specific guidance has been given at each Grade and Level regarding the context of scenes presented.

In Solo/Duo examinations at Level 3, learners are now required to display a knowledge of the musicals from which their songs are taken. At Grade 8 they must also describe the work and influence of one of their selected composers or librettists.

Learners are not permitted to use backing tracks which include any vocal performance, at any level.

Level 3 Certificate in Speech and Drama: Performance Studies (PCertLAM)

Each Unit now has a new title and its own set of detailed assessment criteria matched against learning outcomes. A linked marking scheme has also been introduced. In addition, each Unit will be awarded a Pass or Fail grade, while the overall qualification will be graded at Pass, Merit or Distinction.

Unit 1 still requires learners to describe the preparation for a recital. However, the recital described no longer needs to be the one presented for Unit 2.

In the Knowledge section of Unit 2, learners now need to know the writers' biographical details and the socio-historical context of their work. They also need to give an evaluation of the rehearsal process leading to the presentation of the recital.

In Unit 3, the list of periods and areas for research has been extended to include 20th Century Australasia and 20th Century Africa, India or South East Asia. Where they select 19th or 20th Century Europe including the UK and one other European country, learners must ensure that at least one of their chosen writers is from their selected European country.

Level 5 Diploma in Communication, Speech and Drama Education (LSDE)

The qualification has been expanded to cover Communication. This reflects the fact that learners undertaking the LSDE will now develop a wider subject knowledge than that covered under Speech and Drama.

Each of the three Units now has its own set of assessment criteria matched against learning outcomes, and there is a linked marking scheme. Individual Units will be awarded a Pass or Fail grade, while the overall qualification will be graded at Pass, Merit or Distinction.

For Units 1 and 2, instead of a separate workbook and essay, learners are now required to submit a portfolio of evidence. This must incorporate an analytical overview of subjects and areas listed for that section, and a specialised case study in one of a choice of given areas.

There is now a new section of content in Unit 2 that looks at a broad overview of English literature from the 16th Century to the present day, in addition to strategies and techniques used for speaking verse and prose, drama, and sight-reading.

In Unit 3 it is now clearly stated that the log book, the lesson observation and any areas that learners have identified in their self-assessment will be discussed in a 20 minute session after the external, assessed observation of the lesson.

Meeting the Needs of All Learners: Two Case Studies

The modern schooling system recognises to a far greater extent than that of previous generations that every learner is different and should have access to avenues of learning that are appropriate for their needs. LAMDA examinations can help in meeting the requirements of many learners in schools around the world, at various levels of academic ability, confidence and skill. Two different schools in England have introduced LAMDA examinations to support their students and have provided outstanding examples of this diversified approach to learning.

Sheringham High School is a foundation comprehensive school in Norfolk, with over 790 students aged from 11-19 and its own sixth form on site. As a specialist Performing Arts school, Sheringham is required to develop its performing arts programme in order to maintain its status. Natalie Peatchey, Head of Drama, first introduced the students to LAMDA examinations two years ago. She had prepared learners for LAMDA examinations in previous schools, principally in the independent sector, and wanted her students to have access to further qualifications that would help them develop their performance and communication skills. LAMDA examinations also provided them with practical experience of performing.

The students at Sheringham High School prepare for their LAMDA examinations as part of youth theatre classes, which take place as extracurricular activities. They have taken LAMDA examinations in Acting, Devising Drama, Musical Theatre, Speaking in Public and Reading for Performance. Natalie Peatchey believes that allowing the learners to undertake a variety of different subjects means that each will be able to excel in one area or another. The Reading for Performance examinations have been particularly useful, as they allow the students to explore texts at a deeper level. The skills acquired are then transferable to academic subjects like English, where analysing texts is a fundamental requirement.

Cross-curricular links can be explored in a variety of ways. At Sheringham, this tends to be informal and creative, with the students drawing on their own knowledge and experiences of other subjects, such as English or History. The school would like to extend these opportunities further and find more ways to link to other curriculum subjects.

The students at Sheringham have clearly seen the benefits of taking LAMDA examinations. Natalie Peatchey believes that this is because unlike those from the mainstream examination boards, LAMDA examinations recognise the importance of communication skills in all subjects and in the wider world, giving students the



Photo © Martin Burton Photography

opportunity to improve their speaking skills in many areas. To this end, the knowledge section requires learners to be confident and articulate when being questioned by the examiner. She also feels that LAMDA examinations in Acting and Devising Drama enable students to focus on their individual skills, which is less of an option with classroom drama. The provision of individual report cards has been very helpful, as they offer specific feedback on areas for improvement.

Some of the students at Sheringham have also benefited from being able to share their examination work in school showcases. This gives them a chance to demonstrate their individual abilities, which is not always possible in performances by the whole class. The parents and friends of learners also enjoy the experience, as they do not often get the opportunity to see the students' examination work.

Natalie Peatchey has been encouraged by the success of LAMDA examinations in the school and hopes to make them available to even more students. "Having been a student of LAMDA examinations, I have always known the examinations to be invaluable in what they offer to students. My students enjoy the experience of the examinations and feel them to be worthwhile qualifications."

St Peter's Roman Catholic High School and Sixth Form Centre is a voluntary-aided comprehensive school in Gloucester. It is a large school, with over 1500 students aged between 11 and 18. Helen Hayward, Head of Drama, introduced LAMDA examinations to a small group of learners in 2007. The first group took their examinations at a LAMDA Examinations Public Centre. By the following year, the school had enough students taking the examinations to register as a Private Centre.



Photo © Philip Newton Photography

St Peter's was looking for more opportunities for its gifted and talented drama students, many of whom were keen to apply to highly ranked drama universities. There had been an indication from these institutions that LAMDA examinations would be beneficial.

Helen Hayward also recognised that LAMDA examinations would raise the standard of drama within the school. Although the school has always supported the performing arts, she has worked to raise the bar and to help the school recognise that the students can perform at a professional level. She feels the use of LAMDA examinations has given strength to this argument, because learners are required to perform to a high standard in order to achieve the qualifications.

All the St Peter's learners who have taken LAMDA qualifications undertook the Acting examinations. The students have had the challenging, yet rewarding experience of being taken out of their comfort zone by the examinations. In contrast to GCSE and A Level drama examinations, the solo Acting examinations require students to perform on their own and be examined by an external examiner individually. This gives the students greater ownership of their successes and a stronger sense of responsibility.

The primary aim in introducing the LAMDA examinations at St Peter's was to boost the confidence of students who wanted to improve their communication skills, as well as those who wish to pursue academic or professional careers in drama. Preparation for LAMDA examinations was undertaken in extra-curricular classes, which was a very positive experience for the students. The mixed-age ensemble worked together in rehearsal and assisted each other during the whole process, establishing a supportive structure across the different ages and working groups.

Students with special educational needs have enjoyed some of the greatest benefits from the LAMDA examinations. One of St Peter's most talented youngsters has difficulties with literacy and language interpretation. Despite this, he received a Merit for his LAMDA Grade 4 Acting examination. The practical nature of the examinations allowed him to articulate orally the good understanding he had of his chosen texts and the characters he was portraying, an option not available to him within GCSE and A Level drama curricula.

As with Sheringham High School, the cross-curricula options available to students taking LAMDA examinations have been explored more informally, with some students choosing pieces from texts they were studying in English or Drama in order to gain a deeper understanding. However, this is a potential area for development, since students can be encouraged to make ties with other curriculum subjects when considering both the performance pieces and the knowledge section.

Helen Hayward is very encouraged by the experiences and confidence gained by the students who have taken LAMDA examinations. "[LAMDA examinations] have given the students tremendous confidence and provided additional CV experience which sets them apart. We were delighted when one of our learners got into Bristol University and our first group of students are now working in teaching as well as in theatre based jobs. We are hoping to enter our students for LAMDA exams again in autumn."

If you are interested in bringing LAMDA examinations into your school or college, or would like further information on how LAMDA examinations can meet the needs of all your learners, please contact Bianca Patterson at bianca.patterson@lamda.org.uk.

Centre Support

Regional Workshops

As part of our ongoing support for centres and teachers, LAMDA Examinations offer annual workshops across the UK. The 2010 regional workshops were held in London, Birmingham, Manchester and Exeter.

As in 2009, Communication and Performance workshops were offered to complement the new syllabuses, valid from September 2009. These workshops have ensured that as many centres and teachers as possible have had the opportunity to explore the new syllabuses in detail. The Communication and Performance workshops looked at changes to the syllabuses from the 2004-2009 versions, and explored some of the new or more complex aspects of the syllabuses.

The Communication workshops included exercises relating to knowledge of chosen books and sonnets for Speaking Verse and Prose, theme-based activities for Reading for Performance and exercises exploring different types of speeches for Speaking in Public. The Performance workshop focused mainly on Acting. Exercises covered the new dramatic periods introduced in List A and List B at Level 3, as well as the practitioners Brecht, Stanislavski and Craig, since Level 3 learners are now required to have an understanding of their practices in order to answer the relevant knowledge questions. Some time was also dedicated to the use of music as a stimulus in Devising Drama examinations and in characterisation and the difference between a mime and a mime scene for Miming examinations.

The feedback from the 2010 workshops was very positive. Our centres and teachers have commented that they now feel much more confident in working with the new syllabuses and in helping their learners to achieve the best possible results.

Planning for the 2011 regional workshops will begin shortly. If you have any suggestions for the workshops, please email bianca.patterson@lamda.org.uk, quoting 'Workshops' in the subject bar.

"A really helpful course"

"This workshop was excellent"

"Very informative and helpful – just what was needed!"

"Fantastic workshop – very inspirational"

Summer Workshops Programme

The annual summer workshops Programme ran from 26 July to 30 July 2010 at our headquarters in Barons Court, London. Constructive feedback from the previous year presented us with

some excellent ideas for workshops and the programme was designed to cover various aspects of the syllabuses and other areas of particular interest.

The Communication and Performance workshops already covered in the regional workshop programmes were offered for the last time. These were for the benefit of any centres or teachers who had not been able to access the earlier sessions, as well as for those who are new to LAMDA Examinations. There were also workshops on interpreting Shakespeare for students, drama for students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), period costume and movement, the new PCertLAM, reading skills, selecting repertoire for Acting and Musical Theatre and the effective use of accents.



Enthusiastic participants at the LAMDA Summer Workshops. Photo © LAMDA Ltd

Although all of the subjects covered in the summer workshops programme relate to the syllabuses in some way, the workshops benefit from a wider focus. They allow centres and teachers to explore subjects around the syllabus, so that learners can deliver stronger, more confident performances in the examination. A good example of this is the workshop on accents. Although accents are not required in examinations at the early levels, using a different accent can help the learner to get into character.

This summer workshops week was once again well attended, with delegates travelling from as far as Northern Ireland and Monaco to attend. Almost all of the workshops were fully booked. In some instances, a few more delegates were accommodated at short notice, to ensure that as many centres and teachers as possible could access the workshops.

LAMDA Examinations plans to continue to run the summer workshops programme in the summer of 2011. However, as the exciting new development of the Talgarth Road site begins, it is possible that the programme will be delivered at a different London location. Please check the website at the start of 2011 for details about next summer's programme.

Launch of New Medals

To complement the contemporary design of our new certificates (introduced in September 2009), LAMDA Examinations has redesigned its popular Bronze, Silver and Gold Medals. Our learners value their medals very highly, to the extent that many wear them on ribbons or find ways to display them on their school blazers.

To encourage learners to wear their hard-earned medals with pride, LAMDA Examinations is incorporating a pin function into the new medals. This will allow learners to wear them easily as badges, as well as on ribbons in the traditional manner. The qualification achieved will also be embossed on the edge of the medal, allowing learners to differentiate between their medals.

The new medals will appear over the next few months and we are sure that our learners will enjoy the new design.

New LAMDA Examinations Merchandise

LAMDA Examinations is pleased to announce the release of several appealing new items of merchandise. In addition to the keyring, bookmark, pen, document folder and t-shirt already available, you can now purchase a mouse mat to use at home or at school or an elegant tubby notepad made of genuine leather. Both are emblazoned with the distinctive LAMDA Examinations lettering.

However, the most exciting new addition is the LAMDA Examinations bear. This loveable 8 inch teddy wears a smart LAMDA t-shirt and would be a welcome addition to any child's toy cupboard or teaching room.

The new merchandise can be purchased through our online shop at store.lamda.org.uk, or direct from LAMDA Examinations on 0844 847 0520.



150th Anniversary Journey

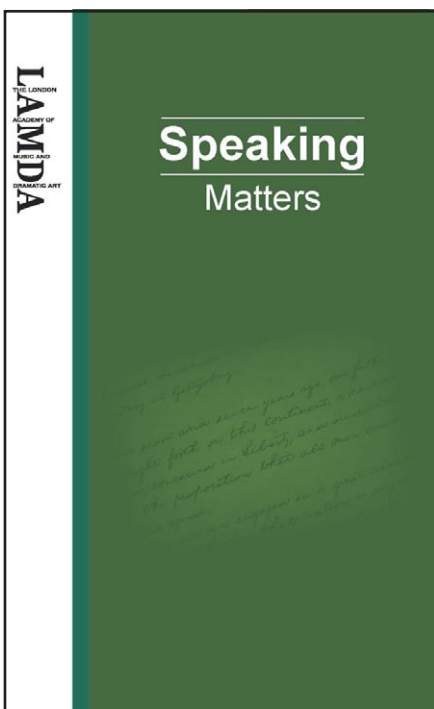
To commemorate LAMDA's 150th anniversary in 2011, the new LAMDA bear will be taking a trip around the world, visiting all the countries where LAMDA Examinations has centres. On his travels he will collect poems from these different cultures to share with our learners in future anthologies. You can keep up with our adventuring bear's journey in future issues of VoiceOver or via our website.

Before he embarks on his journey, our bear needs a name. Centres, teachers or learners wishing to suggest a name for the LAMDA bear can do so by emailing anne.brewer@lamda.org.uk, including the word 'Teddy' in the subject line, by 30 November 2010. The person who suggests the winning name will feature in the next issue of VoiceOver and will also receive a LAMDA Examinations goody bag.

Speaking Matters release

Available for purchase from October 2010, Speaking Matters presents the technical knowledge required for LAMDA Graded Examinations in Communication: Speaking in Public and Using Spoken English. It is also an effective guide for anyone interested in developing their speaking skills.

Presented in an accessible and appealing style, it covers topics such as: choice of subjects, effectively identifying your audience's concerns and interests, using figures of speech, building projection skills and exercises to warm up the vocal chords, among many other points. The book also includes the text and analysis of a variety of speeches by public figures both past and present. These speeches range from the humorous to the highly motivational. (Price: £12.99)



Private Centre Registration Forms

In the April 2010 issue of VoiceOver, LAMDA Examinations introduced the new Private Centre Registration process and form. It is now a requirement of Ofqual, our regulator, that all Private Centres go through a formal centre registration process.

This formal registration process ensures that LAMDA Examinations holds the most current and correct data for your centre, greatly simplifying the despatch of schedules and results. In addition, LAMDA Examinations is supporting its learners by ensuring that its Private Centres have policies in place relating to health and safety, as well as the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

When completing the form, please be aware that some sections may not be applicable to your centre's circumstances, as the form is universal and is used by all Private Centres in the UK and overseas. Please also be aware that if you are a peripatetic teacher who teaches at a number of different centres, you will need to complete a centre registration form for each of your teaching locations.

Centre registration forms were despatched with our June mailing. In order to complete the registration process, the Centre Coordinator must complete and return the form to LAMDA Examinations. Please be aware that if you do not complete this form, you will not be able to request an examination date.

The Communication and Performance Awards

You are reminded that as of 1 September 2009, the Communication and Performance Awards have been replaced with the Joint Qualifications in Communication and Performance. Learners who have completed the three constituent parts can now claim either a Joint Qualification in Communication or a Joint Qualification in Performance by submitting a Joint Qualification Claim Form, along with the requisite fee.

Please continue to check the LAMDA Examinations website for updates about developments in Joint Qualifications.

New Centre Competition Winners

The winner of the new centre competition held earlier this year is Sir Tom Finney Community High School in Preston, Lancashire. LAMDA Examinations is delighted to offer our congratulations to the school, who have won an on-site workshop on a subject of their choice.

Three runner-up prizes were won by Northfleet School for Girls in Kent, Dame Allen's School in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and the drama group at Gants Methodist Church Hall in Essex. Each of these centres has won a free place on a LAMDA Examinations workshop of their choice.

LAMDA Examinations and Beyond

Rising West End star Lauren Samuels talks about how taking LAMDA Examinations helped her get where she is today.



Lauren Samuels. Photo © Kerry Skinner

Lauren Samuels is well qualified to talk about nerves. She performed live under great pressure on BBC1's *Over the Rainbow* in early 2010, and has recently made her West End debut as Sandy in *Grease* at the Piccadilly Theatre. The experience of taking a number of LAMDA examinations while growing up was a major key to her success so far.

It is apparent that regularly participating in LAMDA examinations has given Lauren an inner confidence that she can draw upon when faced with intense situations. "Obviously I used to get nervous," she said. "If you want to be a performer, getting past your nerves is something you have to contend with."

When asked how she is coping so well with the increased pressures that she faces both socially and professionally, Lauren said candidly: "It's going well. The exams absolutely help, not just with my acting ability on stage, but also in different social situations. I owe a lot of it to my LAMDA exams."

Lauren recommends that young people experiment with different pursuits en route to finding out what it is that they really want to do. It was this innate curiosity that led her to the Hinckley Speech and Drama Studio at the age of seven, where she subsequently studied "everything from Acting and Mime to Verse and Prose and Reading for Performance".

"I just enjoyed them so much," said Lauren of her sometimes thrice-yearly LAMDA examinations. "I really loved the process; choosing the pieces, learning the words and practising up to the day that I took the examination. I used to pride myself on achieving the highest marks I possibly could. It teaches you about being organised and having a business mind, which is really useful."

This attention to detail led Lauren to become a finalist in the LAMDA Examinations Communication and Performance Awards in 2006, where she competed against her peers in front of a panel of judges. "Actually, I thoroughly enjoyed it," she said. "I always wanted to try anything I could and doing the exams really gives you the confidence to go for it."

Lauren is an accomplished singer and would have taken the LAMDA Musical Theatre examinations had they been around when she was younger. "I would have loved them," she enthused. "I didn't take an interest in singing until I was fourteen, when I started lessons." She had no hesitation when asked about what her dream role would be. "Eponine, from *Les Miserables*. I had a dream about playing her the other day!"

For the foreseeable future, the iconic role of Sandy will be keeping Lauren busy both on and off stage. What would Lauren's advice be to those who might want to follow in her footsteps? "Try as many different things as possible and give it your all."

And as for the LAMDA examinations? "They've helped me out so much," she said. "I'd recommend them to anyone."