



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel GCE
Music Technology (9MT0)
Paper 03

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9MT0/03 Principal Examiner's Report to Centres 2025

General comments:

This year's paper differentiated well between candidates. There was a decrease in the overall mean mark, which can be principally attributed to the more challenging topic of synthesis in Question 6.

Despite the decrease in the mean mark, candidates exhibited convincing application of knowledge on shorter item topics such as sidechain compression. However, there remain recurring issues, including wearing headphones the wrong way around, not providing sufficient detail specific to each audio stimulus and confusion between the mixing and mastering stages of production.

Candidates are reminded to listen closely to the audio stimulus material; to draw out relevant production details from each stimulus recording, rather than describing a general capture and mixing approach for the era, genre or featured instrument. Where an effect or production technique is identified, candidates must discuss parameter settings and the way in which it is used, rather than providing a list of effects without qualification.

Once again, there were very few incomplete papers, indicating sound time management and exam technique.

Additional answer sheets continue to be used. Candidates are reminded to write concisely, and in the space provided wherever possible to avoid the use of extra sheets.

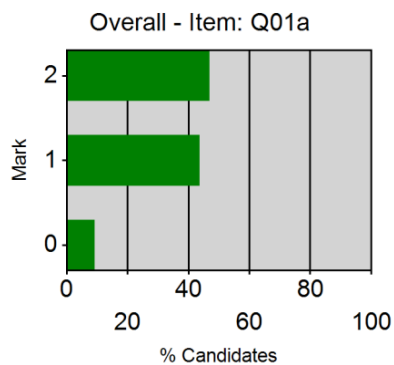
Responses for Questions 5 and 6 that used bullet points were again far more concise than those written in continuous prose. Candidates should be encouraged to take this approach if they prefer, rather than producing an outline plan and then reiterating the same points in continuous prose.

Additionally, the production aspect headings provided for Question 5 can be used as sub-headings in candidate responses.

This report should be read in conjunction with the published mark scheme.

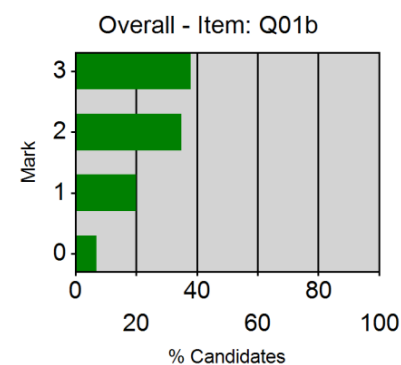
Specific questions:

Question 1



Q01a

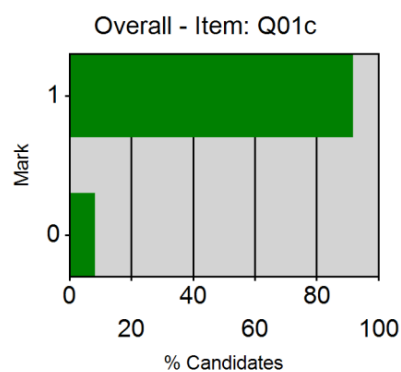
Many scored full marks here



Q01b

There were a variety of response qualities here.

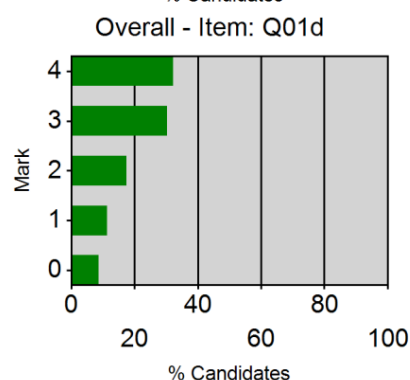
The main issue was not being sufficiently specific, e.g. stating 'drum kit' instead of 'hi-hats'.



Q01c

The majority of candidates recognised the panning shifted from left to right.

A small number seem to be wearing their headphones the wrong way around.

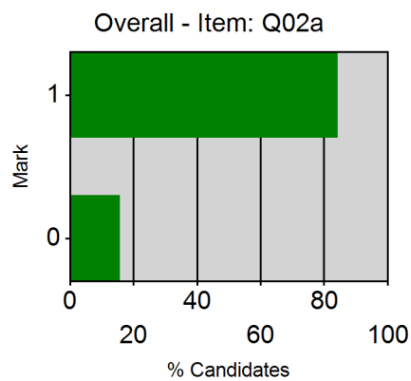


Q01d

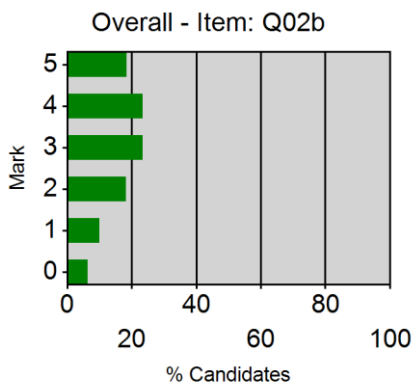
Candidates seemed to really engage with this question and there were many highly detailed responses.

The main issues were describing the compressor being added to the kick track instead of the chords, and a large number scored 3 of the 4 marks because they didn't include any compressor settings.

Question 2

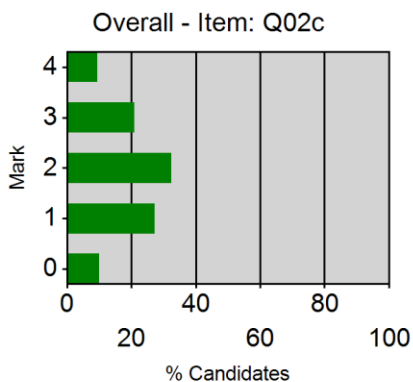


Q02a
Well answered



Q02b
Great differentiation here, with candidates tending to find the first row (slapback delay) more straightforward but lacking sufficient detail in the second row to score full marks.

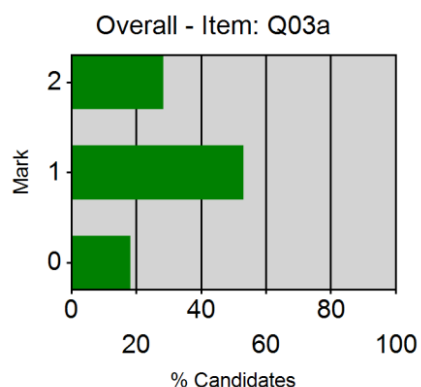
Perceptive candidates commented on the second delay being slightly out of time and filtered, linking this to tape delay technology.



Q02c
There were a wide range of response qualities here too.

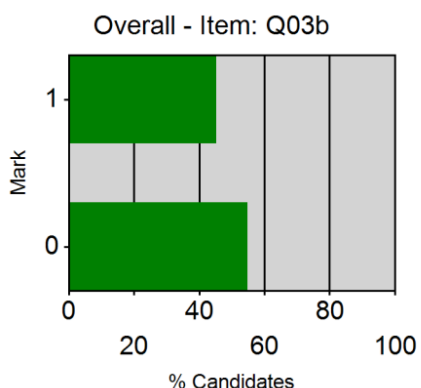
More limited responses covered the loud volume of the drum kit and something about the reverb, while more advanced responses linked the reverb to the recording room and were also inclined to discuss the likely capture methods.

Question 3



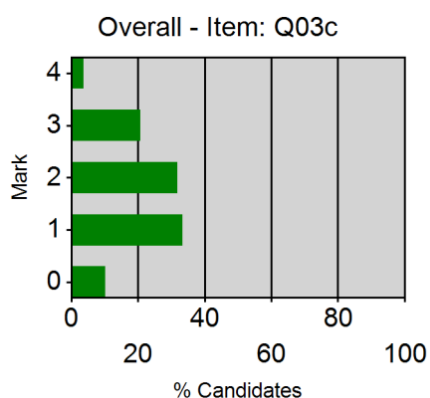
Q03a

Many candidates scored the capture point, but responses that also clearly described the subsequent transfer to the studio multitrack tape were far rarer.



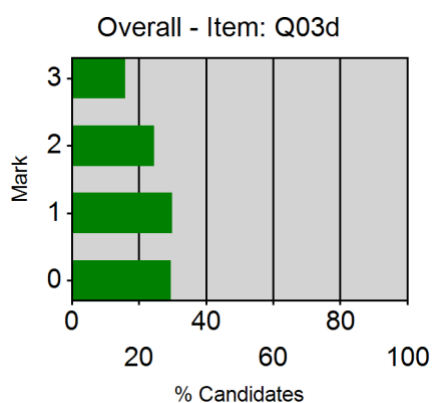
Q03b

Some perceptive answers here, where candidates had listened carefully. Others opted for 'stock' responses such as hiss or hum.



Q03c

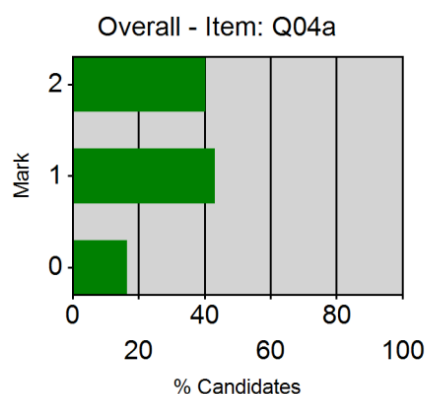
There were a wide range of response qualities here. Often, candidates were limited by not giving enough detail to secure the mark (e.g. 'use a compressor') or described mixing processes relating to specific instruments (and not mastering). It should be noted that the mark scheme *does* cover AI-assisted processes that do allow adjustment of individual instruments/vocals when processing a stereo master, but this needed to be clearly explained for the mark to be awarded.



Q03d

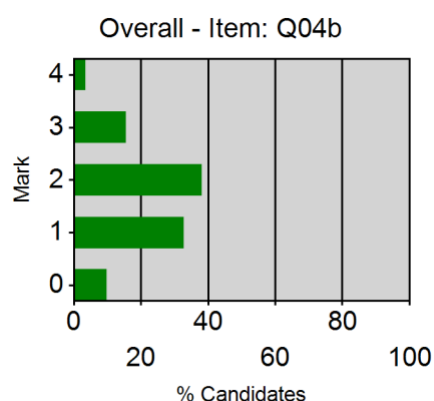
The most successful responses discussed the changes to the reverb in chronological order, clearly referencing the sections and likely parameter settings. More limited responses gave a point relating to one of the sections and/or suggested that the vocal part was using chamber or plate reverb due to the year of release.

Question 4



Q04a

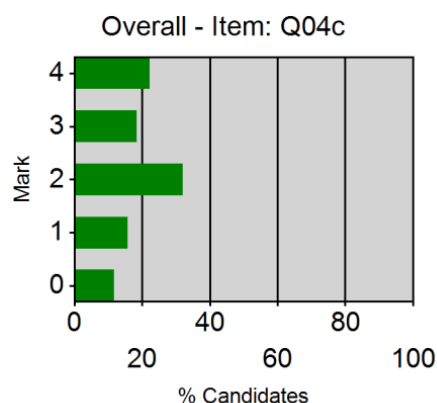
Well answered overall. Some candidates were nearly there with points but lacked specific detail, e.g. 'there's some distortion', rather than linking it to guitars.



Q04b

A wide variety of response qualities for this question.

Many were only able to identify a lack of unwanted noise as an advantage of using a DI box to record bass guitar.

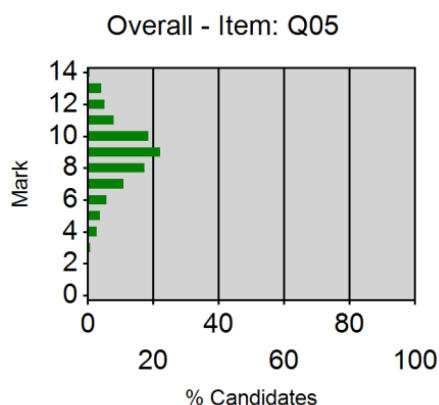


Q04c

A wide variety of response qualities for this question. Those who were well-prepared would score full marks with discussion of compression and either EQ or volume automation.

More limited responses scored 1-2 marks on AO3 or were able to discuss compression in sufficient detail to score 2 marks.

Question 5



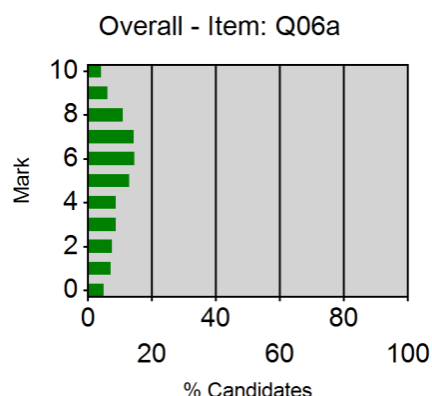
Q05

Most candidates provided perceptive, largely detailed accounts of capture and style for the Dean Martin version, which had far less in the way of intentional processing.

There were more responses this year that made it into Level 4, with some track-specific detail that moved them away from general points that could be applied to almost any song from each of the relevant eras.

There were many clear and general Level 3 responses too, but fewer lower or higher than this. Candidates who had valid track-specific discussion with time references and the parameters used made it into Level 5, but such responses were relatively rare.

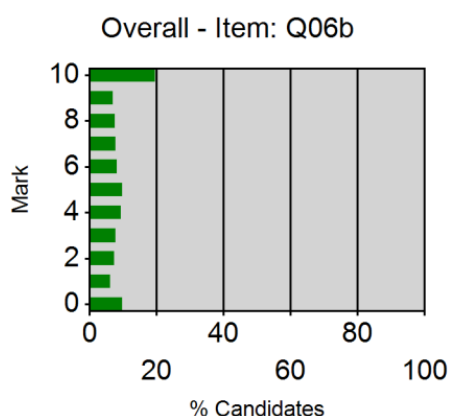
Question 6



Q06a

Many struggled to identify or explain the effect of the synthesis parameters that had been used to shape the sound.

Many candidates were able to perform well on AO3 points, but AO4 explanations were not as strong or missing. We'd encourage a general 'brush-up' on how subtractive synthesisers work.



Q06b

In a similar way to last year's delay question, candidates seemed confident with the historical context of analogue synthesisers, with a large number approaching full marks. Synthesis is a major topic, and centres should be commended here for their preparation of candidates for this part of Question 6.

Most worked chronologically through the development of analogue synthesisers, which offered useful structure to responses.

A common issue was including discussion of digital and plug-in synthesisers, which were not covered by the question, except for digital emulation of analogue hardware.