

Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator
Feedback



Summer 2016

GCE Music (6MU01) Unit 1: Performing Music

The overall standard of submissions for this unit in 2016 was generally comparable to recent years. There were, as ever, a number of outstanding performances. Very few performances were inadequate but some submissions were penalised for being under-length. Centres are reminded that **five to six minutes** of music is required for this unit, not including tuning, count-ins or gaps between pieces. Centres are also reminded that the performance must be recorded as a **single continuous and unedited track**.

Assessment

The application of the assessment criteria by teacher examiners was generally sound. Whilst the vast majority of teacher examiner marks were fair, a number marked their candidates' work too generously, and a few marked too harshly. Centres should bear in mind the descriptors of the marking bands (e.g. Outstanding, Excellent, Adequate) as well as the wording of each criterion.

It is wise for centres to remember that moderation is based on the recording alone, not a live performance. Bearing this in mind **centres should assess the recording** of each candidate, rather than the live performance.

A number of candidates performing music in contemporary popular styles used a very limited dynamic range, denying access to the highest marks in Criterion 5: Phrasing, articulation and dynamics. Similarly some centres seem to think that a performance with a backing track immediately gets 8/8 for Criterion 3: Fluency and tempo - this is only the case if the performance is fluent and completely assured in matching the timing of the backing track.

Holistic band and Raw mark

Teachers are encouraged to **select a holistic mark band first** (e.g. 26-30: Adequate) and then to embark on marking with the five detailed assessment criteria. It is hoped that the final mark will then fit in the selected holistic band; if this is not the case the teacher must either adjust the holistic band or the detailed marks. Whatever the outcome, **the final raw mark should fit within the holistic mark band** on the MAS1 form.

Difficulty levels

Most performances were above the Standard Level (Grade 5), with More Difficult (Grade 6) being the most common difficulty level. Performances below Standard Level were uncommon. Centres are reminded that the **Edexcel Difficulty Level Booklet** is available on the website. Difficulty levels for improvisations should take into account the whole performance, not just the difficulty of the stimulus.

Performance from score / Improvisation

Solo performance from a score was by far the most popular option. There were, however, some excellent examples of improvisations and ensemble performances this year. There were a few performances this year that were neither from a score nor an improvisation, e.g. pieces learnt aurally which did not match a printed score. These were often submitted as improvisations, which they are not. They should be assessed against the accuracy of the printed score submitted.

Scores

There were a number of inadequate scores this year. A detailed score must always be provided for assessment and moderation of performance from a score. Centres are reminded that **scores submitted must have sufficient detail** for a fair assessment to be made, particularly regarding accuracy of pitch and rhythm. When inadequate scores were submitted, centres were contacted to provide a suitable replacement. **Reference recordings cannot be submitted** in lieu of a score for this unit.

Presentation

Most centres took great care over the presentation of candidates' work. Centres should pay close attention to the **Administrative Support Guide**, available on the website, for details of what is required. Most recordings were of very good quality, although centres should **check the balance between soloist and accompaniment**. The following points should also be addressed by some centres:

- The MAS1 form should be photocopied as a **four page A3 booklet**, and not stapled or loose A4 sheets
- The work of each candidate should be on a separate CD
- The CD should be formatted to play on audio equipment, not just a computer

Instruments

The most popular instruments this year were, once again, piano, voice, and guitar. A few candidates indicated on the MAS1 form that they wished to be assessed on two instruments simultaneously (e.g. voice and piano, when accompanying themselves). There is no means of doing this within this specification and they must choose which instrument is to be assessed (e.g. voice or piano).

Accompaniments

A small number of performances were compromised, as in previous years, by poor accompaniments that did not support the work of the candidate. Where a backing track is used as an accompaniment centres should endeavour, where possible, to ensure that there are no audible metronome clicks once the performance has begun.

Contact with centres

When moderators had to contact centres because of a problem (e.g. missing scores) the response was almost always swift and helpful which greatly aided the moderation process.