

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2012

GCSE Music (5MU01)
Performing Music

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications come from Pearson, the world's leading learning company. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk for our BTEC qualifications.

Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

If you have any subject specific questions about this specification that require the help of a subject specialist, you can speak directly to the subject team at Pearson.

Their contact details can be found on this link:

www.edexcel.com/teachingservices.

You can also use our online Ask the Expert service at www.edexcel.com/ask. You will need an Edexcel username and password to access this service.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at:

www.pearson.com/uk

Summer 2012

Publications Code UG032721

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2012

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

GCSE Music Performing subject report 2MU01 Summer 2012

This summer's exams have shown as usual an extensive range of performances both in terms of quality and range. There appears to be a continued improvement in the general quality of the performances and there appears to be far fewer poor performances this year. In my survey of instruments marked, vocal submissions remain at a high 24%, while there has been a slight downturn in the use of piano and keyboard (23.5%); there were far fewer guitar and drum kit performances this year (23%). There has been a 1.5% increase towards orchestral instruments, with strings, woodwind and brass each showing a 0.5% increase in moderated performance. The areas of change are in lower strings, flute and trumpet. This bodes well for the health and breadth of our young musical talent.

While the majority of centres submit their material correctly and on time, there were some concerns raised from moderators about the submissions from centres. The issues found included; errors in the marks awarded candidates, problems with or incorrectly formatted CDs, incomplete submissions and paperwork missing.

The following points highlight the most common issues;

- Mus100 forms – the four pages should be photocopied onto one A3 sheet to produce a folded A4 booklet.
- One CD for performing is required. There is no need to send individual CD's for each performance.
- Level of Difficulty. The new grids are aimed to make it far more straightforward. It is important that TEs read through these and choose which boxes are the most appropriate for the piece being marked. For each of the nine rows, a level can be agreed and at the end of this process there will be a clear level to apply (that which has five or more statements applying to it). Where pieces have boxes from all three levels, then a best fit and cancelling process ensues (ie one E will cancel out an MD and make it S eg MD MD S E S S MD MD MD = S).

Solo performing

The majority of pieces chosen by teachers and candidates were appropriate. There was evidence that teachers and candidates are taking more care to ensure that candidates perform the most suitable pieces, though there were still a few centres which sent in performances that were far beyond the standard required both in terms of length and difficulty. While there are many candidates who can play to a very high standard, it is rare for these pieces to attain a raw mark of 30 before applying the Level of Difficulty grid. Most orchestral instrumentalists

and singers performed their solos with either piano accompaniment or with a backing track whereas some guitarists and bassists attempted to emulate well-known songs without any form of accompaniment, which at times resulted in their performances being unconvincing. Choices of performances varied from centre to centre with the majority of traditional instrumentalists playing graded pieces including studies. The Rock School examination materials continue to provide excellent opportunities for guitarists and drummers. There were some fine performances and it is pleasing to note that the general standard of playing here has risen considerably in recent years. A worrying trend is the presentation of instrumental solos without their accompaniment; very few performances played in this way displayed the full range of interpretation and accuracy that was possible and the lack of accompaniment mostly affected the outcome.

Sequencing and realisation options were relatively few this year; indeed there were fewer sequences sent in than last year. Most of these were well produced, demonstrating a good understanding of the procedures used. It would greatly help with the moderation if adequate scores and information were provided as well as the development of musicality in the sequenced performances. The realisation option is still being under-used.

Ensemble performing

Again, centres produce an excellent range of performances here but often the ensemble performance gains fewer marks than the solo as they often display evidence of being less carefully prepared. In these the exact nature of the ensemble is often unclear and the role of the candidate can also be uncertain.

Good performances abound though and there were some particularly lovely ones heard by the moderators, including some fine rock bands. There was a marked increase in the number of vocalists presenting for ensemble performances of popular numbers from current musicals, (of which "Wicked" is a popular example). While these pieces are nominally duets, they do not fulfil the criteria for ensemble in the specification, despite these concerns being raised in last year's report. Because the parts are mainly consecutive, not simultaneous, the majority of the piece becomes either a solo for the candidate, or the candidate is silent while the other parts play: this severely limits the credit for demonstrating ensemble skill.

When a centre submits similar pieces for a range of candidates, it is important to make things particularly clear and to ensure that the performers each have the opportunity to demonstrate their ability properly.

The music technology options for ensemble performing continue to show great variance. There were a significant range of recordings, mainly where the candidate acted as an engineer, and most were for rock band style performances.

Other options:

Beat boxing/DJ sound diffusions and rapping produced some interesting performances, including some very fine mature versions. There was evidence that the teacher examiners were not particularly clear on the expectations of these options and there was evidence of over-marking.

Improvisation has not developed very much in recent years, there are often some fine performances, however these often form part of a composed piece. Some teacher examiners marked using both criteria and finalising a best fit mark in these instances: this is to be commended as a sensible approach and moderators commented on this favourable where it happened.

The directing an ensemble option continues to be the least popular, with only a handful of candidates being offered for moderation.

Application of marking criteria

It is clear that teachers are becoming more familiar with the mark schemes and moderators felt that the marking displayed a great confidence and accuracy. Most TEs made realistic, and often detailed and perceptive, comments though there were still a number of centres who failed to add comments.

The interpretation aspects of a piece are vital, it is helpful for the moderators if teachers are clear here – just using the wording from the spec is not enough, adding a particular comment about a particular section or bar helps to justify your mark, but also enables us to understand how the TE mark has come about.

It is hoped that centres will continue to work hard to maintain the excellent standards of performances in recent years. As this new specification settles, TEs seem to continue to show a clear understanding of the work required.

Further copies of this publication are available from
Edexcel Publications, Adamsway, Mansfield, Notts, NG18 4FN

Telephone 01623 467467

Fax 01623 450481

Email publication.orders@edexcel.com

Order Code UG032721 Summer 2012

For more information on Edexcel qualifications, please visit
www.edexcel.com/quals

Pearson Education Limited. Registered company number 872828
with its registered office at Edinburgh Gate, Harlow, Essex CM20 2JE

Ofqual




Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



Rewarding Learning