

## Performance assessment grid 1: Technical control – Technique

In this grid, marks are awarded for the technical control of the instrument, for example, coordination between the hands, or of the bow/fingers; breath control; diction, pedalling; registration; intonation; tone quality; use of filters and effects and control of musical sources.

This will include making use of musical elements as appropriate to the requirements of the instrument(s) and piece performed. For ensemble performances, this grid assesses only the student's individual control of their instrument.

For performances up to difficulty level 2 please see the wording in italics in the grid below.

Level	Mark	Technique
	0	No rewardable material
<b>Level 1</b>	1–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The performance overall demonstrates poor technical control, as heard in poor coordination, breath control, diction, and/or pedalling.</li><li>• The demands of the music are beyond the current ability of the performer.</li><li>• The handling of sonority is poor, as heard in a dull, thin, coarse tone quality across the range and/or poor intonation throughout and/or poor use of filters and effects.</li></ul> <p>If the difficulty of the music performed is pre-difficulty level 1 the mark awarded in this grid cannot exceed this level.</p>
<b>Level 2</b>	3–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The performance demonstrates limited technical control, as heard in limited coordination, breath control, diction, and/or pedalling.</li><li>• There are a few places where the demands of the music are beyond the current ability of the performer.</li><li>• The handling of sonority is limited, as heard in a dull, thin, coarse tone quality in places and/or limited intonation in places and/or limited use of filters and effects.</li></ul> <p>If the difficulty of the music performed is at difficulty level 1 the mark awarded in this grid cannot exceed this level.</p>

Level	Mark	Technique
<b>Level 3</b>	5–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The performance demonstrates basic technical control, as heard in basic coordination, breath control, diction, and/or pedalling.</li> <li>• There are one or two moments where the demands of the piece are beyond the current ability of the performer.</li> <li>• The handling of sonority is good, as heard in consistently good tone quality except at the extremities of the pitch range or at moments of technical difficulty and/or good intonation and/or good use of filters and effects.</li> </ul> <p>If the difficulty of the music performed is at difficulty level 2 the mark awarded in this grid cannot exceed this level.</p>
<b>Level 4</b>	7–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The performance demonstrates convincing technical control, as heard in convincing coordination, breath control, diction, and/or pedalling.</li> <li>• The demands of the music are within the ability of the performer.</li> <li>• The handling of sonority is convincing, as heard in very good tone quality across the pitch range (satisfying, interesting and even as the music demands), including, where appropriate, very good and sensitive tonal contrast throughout and/or very good intonation and/or very good use of filters and effects.</li> </ul>

## Performance assessment grid 2: Expression and interpretation

In this grid, marks are awarded for communicating a musically convincing performance through the use of musical elements as appropriate to the piece performed. The text in italics is to be applied to ensemble performances.

Level	Mark	Expression and interpretation
	0	No rewardable material
<b>Level 1</b>	1–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inappropriate or inconsistent tempo throughout.</li> <li>• Little or no appropriate dynamic contrast, and little or no attention given to phrasing and articulation.</li> <li>• The performance communicates poorly.</li> <li>• In ensemble performances there is little awareness of balance.</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2</b>	3–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An unsuitable or inconsistent tempo in places.</li> <li>• Limited use of dynamics, phrasing and articulation to shape the performance.</li> <li>• The performance struggles to communicate and may sound mechanical.</li> <li>• In ensemble performances there is occasional awareness of balance.</li> </ul>
<b>Level 3</b>	5–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of tempo is usually appropriate and consistent</li> <li>• Some use of dynamics, phrasing and articulation to shape the performance, but several opportunities, notated or otherwise, are missed</li> <li>• The performance demonstrates some involvement with the music.</li> <li>• In ensemble performances there is a good awareness of balance throughout</li> </ul>
<b>Level 4</b>	7–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of tempo is appropriate and consistent throughout.</li> <li>• Appropriate use of dynamics, phrasing and articulation to shape the performance.</li> <li>• The performance communicates very well, with no more than one or two less successful moments.</li> <li>• In ensemble performances there is excellent awareness of balance throughout.</li> </ul>

### Performance assessment grid 3: Technical control (accuracy) and expression and interpretation (fluency)

In this grid, marks are awarded for the technical control (accuracy), and the expression and interpretation (fluency) of the performance, as appropriate to the chosen instrument(s) and piece, including making use of musical elements as appropriate. The text in italics is to be applied to improvised and/or ensemble performances as appropriate.

Level	Mark	Accuracy and fluency
	0	No rewardable material.
<b>Level 1</b>	1–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The performance has several noticeable/obtrusive errors in pitch and/or rhythm that impact on its success overall.</li> <li>Coherence and fluency are frequently compromised by breakdowns and/or omissions.</li> <li>Improvised performances demonstrate little accuracy when performing the stimulus and little development of this material. The improvisation will lack coherence and contrast.</li> <li>In ensemble performances there is evidence of difficulty in reacting and adjusting to other parts.</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2</b>	3–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The performance has noticeable/obtrusive errors or omissions in pitch and/or rhythm, that have little or no impact on its success overall.</li> <li>There are moments where coherence is lost, with some hesitation and/or omission, but the performance is still reasonably fluent for the majority of piece.</li> <li>Improvised performances demonstrate some accuracy when performing the stimulus, with limited development of the stimulus. The improvisation sounds repetitive, predictable and/or formulaic.</li> <li>In ensemble performances there is occasional difficulty in reacting and adjusting to other parts.</li> </ul>

Level	Mark	Accuracy and fluency
<b>Level 3</b>	5–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The performance has no more than one or two noticeable/obtrusive errors or omissions in pitch and/or rhythm, that have minimal impact on its success overall.</li> <li>• The performance is mostly coherent and fluent despite the occasional hesitation and/or omission.</li> <li>• Improvised performances demonstrate a mostly accurate performance and show some development of the stimulus. The improvisation attempts to create variety but may rely heavily on repetition, and be predictable and/or formulaic in places.</li> <li>• In ensemble performances there is generally good reaction and, where appropriate, adjustment to other parts.</li> </ul>
<b>Level 4</b>	7–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The performance is largely accurate with no more than one or two minor errors in pitch and/or rhythm. These errors have no impact on its success overall.</li> <li>• The performance is coherent and fluent despite the occasional slight hesitation and/or omission</li> <li>• Improvised performances demonstrate an accurate performance of the stimulus, and produce an interesting realisation of the stimulus. The improvisation is coherent, well balanced and effective throughout.</li> <li>• In ensemble performances a consistently responsive reaction, and where appropriate, adjustment to other parts is evident.</li> </ul>

## Difficulty levels grid

Depending on how difficult the piece of music performed is, the marks for its difficulty should be applied using this grid. The difficulty level of selected pieces of music can be found in the *Pearson Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9–1) in Music Difficulty levels booklet*, on the Pearson website. These can be used as indicators of the demand of pieces of music and should inform the teacher's judgement in assessing how difficult the pieces performed by the students are. This booklet shows how levels of difficulty can be applied to all instruments for all performances in an accurate and consistent way.

For this GCSE Music qualification, pieces identified as level 4 are identified as 'standard'; above this (level 5 and above) pieces are 'more difficult' and below this (levels 1-3) they are 'less difficult'. Students selecting pieces of music up to difficulty level 2, should be advised that to do so will mean that they are only able to access specific levels and marks in assessment grid 1 (Technique). Pieces at pre-difficulty level 1 are restricted to level 1 of the assessment grid. Pieces at difficulty level 1 are restricted to level 2 of the assessment grid and pieces at difficulty level 2 are restricted to level 3 of the assessment grid. Pieces at difficulty level 3 and above can access the complete grid.

Specific examples of difficulty levels for ensemble performances are not provided in the booklet. In all cases the difficulty level for ensemble performances must be decided by directly comparing the student's part with the examples for solo performance provided and looking for an equivalent level.

Where instruments other than those listed in the *Pearson Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9–1) in Music Difficulty levels booklet* are presented (such as non-GME instruments, e.g. sitar), its difficulty level should be assessed at a comparable level of demand with GME instruments.

Where there is no tradition of graded examinations for the instrument presented, the difficulty level should be assessed at a comparable demand. For example:

**Beatboxing** will be less difficult if it involves a simple rhythmic idea maintained with basic drum-kit sounds at a steady beat. To achieve standard level it would need two or more of the following:

- Fills with alternative sounds
- Syncopated rhythmic ideas
- Dynamic contrasts
- A fast tempo
- A piece with contrasting sections.

More difficult pieces will be fast, include syncopation, make use of effects such as echo or reverb, and include a wide range of imaginative sounds, including mimicry of standard instruments and scratching effects.

**Rapping** will be less difficult if it has a single simple rhythmic idea, a steady beat and simple rhymes. To achieve standard level it would need two or more of the following:

- A sung hook
- Syncopated rhythms, including breaks
- Dynamic contrasts
- A fast tempo making greater demands of articulation
- A piece with contrasting sections.

More difficult pieces will always be fast, requiring control of articulation, and make use of syncopation. They will always have a sung hook.

When performing a live solo line over a pre-recorded/sequenced backing track, the level of difficulty is assessed on the live part performed only.

When assessing students' performances, teachers must take the raw mark (the total from the three performance assessment grids out of 24 marks) and decide which level of difficulty the piece performed was. The number in the corresponding difficulty level column will provide the total mark (out of 30) for the performance.

This approach should be used to obtain the marks for both students' solo and ensemble performances. These marks will be combined to produce a final total mark out of 60 for this component.

If a student has chosen to perform more than one piece of music for either their solo or ensemble performance, the teacher assessing must apply a difficulty level to the whole performance based on an average, although taking into consideration the relative length of pieces where these lengths are unbalanced.

Raw mark	Less difficult	Standard	More difficult
1	1	1	2
2	2	3	3
3	3	4	5
4	4	5	6
5	5	6	8
6	6	8	9
7	7	9	11
8	8	10	12
9	9	11	14
10	10	13	15

Raw mark	Less difficult	Standard	More difficult
11	11	14	17
12	12	15	18
13	13	16	20
14	14	18	21
15	15	19	23
16	16	20	24
17	17	21	26
18	18	23	27
19	19	24	29
20	20	25	30
21	21	26	30
22	22	28	30
23	23	29	30
24	24	30	30

## Security and backups

It is the centre's responsibility to keep the work that students have submitted for assessment secure.

Secure storage is defined as a securely-locked cabinet or cupboard. Where students are producing work, secure storage is defined as a classroom studio or workshop that is locked or supervised from the end of one session to the start of the next.

For materials stored electronically, centres are strongly advised to utilise firewall protection and virus-checking software, and to employ an effective backup strategy, so that an up-to-date archive of students' evidence is maintained.

## Further information

For up-to-date advice on teacher involvement and administration of non-examination assessments, please refer to the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) document *Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments (new GCE and GCSE specifications)* available on the JCQ website: [www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk)