



Moderator's Report Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel Level 1/Level 2
GCSE (9-1) in Music (1MU0)
Component 1 (Performing)

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Publications Code 1MU0_01_2406_ER

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Introduction

2024 was the third year of external moderation following the pandemic, full requirements were in place for a second year.

Centres devoted significant time to prepare materials for submission. The majority of work was well-presented and accurately marked. However, some moderators did note a decline in the quality of administration, although it was largely maintained.

Performance of Candidates

Students achieved across the full mark range. Of the work sampled by moderators, there was a small percentage increase in students achieving high marks compared to last year.

There were many well-prepared performances, some were exceptional and exceeded expectation. Of note were the 1st movement from Malcom Arnold's Clarinet Sonatina, a piano quartet arrangement of Gurlitt's Under the Village Lime Tree, Stars from Les Misérables and a saxophone improvisation. Moderators were also impressed by piano, vocal (including musical theatre and Gregorian chant), Carnatic voice, viola, cello, double bass, drum kit, marimba, xylophone, bagpipe and church organ performances.

Piano performances were the most frequent submission at 30%, representing a slight decrease compared to last year. Female voice followed closely behind at 17.8%, with drum kit, electric guitar, and violin completing the top five at 7.9%, 7.8%, and 6.2%, respectively. Since 2019, data shows a continuing overall trend of increasing popularity in piano/keyboard and string performances. In addition, brass and drum kit submissions are also higher. It is worth noting that there were increases in cello, drum kit, acoustic guitar, male voice, keyboard, violin, trombone, bassoon, and bass guitar submissions this year.

It was observed that performances moderated at less difficult were notably less numerous than standard or more difficult, with a considerable proportion at more difficult. Most candidates selected pieces that were suitable for their skill level and received similar marks for both performances. In cases where the selected piece was too challenging, performances demonstrated a lack of fluency, or accuracy was achieved at the expense of tempo and interpretation.

Centres are reminded, where there is a written accompaniment this must be played for solo performance. Incidents remain where students were disadvantaged because the accompaniment was omitted.

Moderators noted inconsistency in the approach taken to prepare students for ensemble performance. Pieces selected usually matched ability and the difficulty level of the solo. It was felt, in some instances, that not enough time was devoted to

preparing ensemble performance. Very rarely, the same ensemble piece was used to assess all students, which did not accurately reflect individual abilities.

Although the majority of ensemble repertoire selections are made thoughtfully, some centres overlooked limited amounts of ensemble singing found in theatre-style duets.

Assessment

Accuracy of teacher application of the assessment grids has shown improvement. Comments relating to, and expanding upon, wording of the assessment grids were helpful to the moderation process. However, it was observed that comments did not always relate to the marks awarded.

There were still instances where some assessment grid statements were not taken into consideration, resulting in inaccuracies in marking. For example, by placing too much emphasis on poor intonation rather than balance intonation against sonority. Inaccurate marking was also found where the wording of the grids was not referred to, or comments were sparse.

There still seemed to be a hesitancy to award full marks where performances fully meet all statements within an assessment grid. Some performances that deserved full marks were only awarded a raw mark of 21 out of 24.

Assessment grid 1

Certain aspects of technical control, such as tone quality for singers and coordination for pianists (specifically uneven passagework), were often overlooked and marked leniently.

Assessment grid 2

Centres were not always rigorous in assessing tempo, often awarding a mark in the level 4 band where performances were under-tempo or displayed inconsistency in tempo. Moderators noted some leniency in assessment of dynamics and articulation when they were either missing or limited.

Where an ensemble recording is imbalanced, for example the microphone is placed too close to one performer, a comment on the assessed student's ensemble balance is particularly helpful to the moderator.

Assessment grid 3

There was a noticeable trend of penalising intonation in both assessment grid 1 and 3, instead of solely grid 1. Occasionally, coherence and fluency were penalised, mixing these up with the inconsistent tempo in grid 2.

Difficulty Levels

Approximately half of the submissions referenced the Difficulty Levels Booklet. Those submissions that did not mention the Booklet had instead consulted graded exam syllabuses. A small, but increasing, number of teacher assessors referred to the Difficulty Levels: Further Guidance for Ensemble Performances document where pieces were not listed in the Booklet or a graded exam syllabus. Use of this document is encouraged.

Moderators found discrepancies where teacher assessors had not consulted any of the documentation.

Administration

While most submissions allowed for the completion of moderation in the initial review, instances of missing files, missing pages within files, and incorrect labelling were more prevalent this year. Additionally, moderators have reported a rise in incidents where centre marks were not inputted to Edexcel Online.

Performance Authentication Sheet (PAS)

Most PAS forms were clearly presented, moderation became more challenging when:

- PAS spreadsheet was not filled in using Excel
- Adobe 'Fill & Sign' was used to authenticate PDF
- scanned PDF was submitted in incorrect orientation
- piece was named incorrectly
- difficulty level awarded was not clear
- role in ensemble was not clear or omitted
- other parts in ensemble were omitted.

Performance Length

Performance length is measured from the start of the first note of the piece, to the end of the last.

A large proportion of submissions were measured inaccurately by centres. In some cases, moderators found announcements (which are no longer required) were included, or track length itself was stated. Furthermore, there were still instances where centres incorrectly deducted time for an introduction or bars where the student did not play.

While moderators have observed a slight decrease in the number of incidents where centres incorrectly reported the four minute combined duration threshold had been met, accuracy of measurement of declared under length submissions remains static.

Scores

Where a written score or lead sheet exists, this must be submitted. The moderation process was straightforward where scores were:

- submitted as a single PDF file for each performance
- readable, in correct orientation, with all pages present and in order
- annotated with deviations agreed with the teacher assessor
- annotated where bars / sections have been omitted.

Centres are reminded that scores must contain all the information necessary to assess the accuracy of the performance.

Recordings

This year saw less variability in quality of recordings, fewer were presented with a low bit rate. Microphone choice has improved but there are still instances where use of automatic gain control impacts dynamic range.

Centres are reminded that recordings should be ambient rather than close-miked and/or multi-tracked:

- recordings should be made with a high quality (external) microphone
- recording level should be checked, too high (creates distortion)
- balance should be equal between the student and other performers
- capture drummers with care, all parts of the kit should be balanced/audible
- automatic gain/microphone control should be disabled
- announcements are no longer required
- recordings should be made in .wav or .aif/.aiff file formats (16 bit, 44.1kHz)
- if using data compressed encoding (.m4a/.mp4 or .mp3), bit rate should be at least 256kbps.

Recordings must not be edited. Effects, dynamic processing, volume automation and fades should not be added.

Where more than one piece is performed for either solo or ensemble, the pieces must be performed together in one unedited recording.

Moving forward centres should:

- Refer to the 2025 Administrative Support Guide
- Submit the up-to-date PAS form
- Submit a score where one exists. Where a piece is learnt aurally, a professional reference recording may be submitted in addition
- Award difficulty levels in this order:
 - Difficulty Levels Booklet (indicate row number)

- Graded exams (ABRSM, Trinity, LCM, Rockschoool, MTB) (indicate board and year)
- Difficulty levels: Further Guidance for Ensemble Performances for both solo and ensemble pieces (justify level by referring to criteria)
- Ensure performance length is measured accurately
- Ensure marks have been submitted to Edexcel Online by deadline, and are correct.

Grade Boundaries

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

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>