



Moderator's Report Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2024

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

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Introduction

In 2024, external moderation of the component continued. Candidates for Component 2 (Composing) were expected to submit one 'Free' composition and respond to one Set Brief with a portfolio of a minimum length of 3 minutes. To accompany the compositions, a CAS (in Excel Spreadsheet or editable PDF formats) two scores or commentaries and two recordings of the music needed to be uploaded to the LWA for each candidate.

The component requirements and guidance information for 2406 were available to centres to download from the GCSE (9-1) Music (1MU0) page on the Pearson/Edexcel website.

Once again, Teacher Assessors and Examinations Officers should be commended for the time and effort given to the preparation of materials to support the effective management of the moderation process.

Performance of Candidates

Based on moderator feedback, as with 1MU0-01, a similar percentage of students as 2023 achieved high/full marks possibly because:

- 1) The specification requirements are now embedded with Teacher Assessors and candidates.
- 2) More candidates are composing based on their musical interests and experiences rather than having 'one size fits all' tasks being prescribed.
- 3) The accessibility and availability of a wide range of music technology resources have allowed more candidates to realise their creative ideas more effectively.
- 4) More Teacher Assessors can judge their candidates' work accurately.

Again, there were very small numbers of low-scoring candidates in 2024. The number of under-length compositions was similar to the two previous years possibly because candidates found it easier to create two shorter-length compositions which in total met the 3-minute requirement.

In 2024 moderators reported that they are seeing a wide range of styles of compositions. It is a concern that yet again, a significant number of Teacher Assessors overlooked the specification requirement for candidates to compose using their musical interests and experiences and instead set generic tasks for the whole cohort. This often generated formulaic and less creative compositions. The usual blues, theme and variations, ternary form and minimalist styles were commonly used in these cases.

Over the past two years, many centres have encouraged candidates to produce some excellent commentaries using screenshots in conjunction with exported MIDI parts and detailed musical information. Difficulties arose with audio tracks

for vocal lines or recorded parts where no guidance was provided on replicating the part beyond a lead sheet or screenshot.

Candidates submitting notated scores often highlighted their creative intentions for their compositions by giving detailed musical instructions including articulations, tempo and dynamic markings. Unfortunately, some scores were difficult to interpret because the instrumental parts were unlabelled or unquantized.

Listening to well-balanced recordings -both 'live' and technology-based- was a pleasure. Teacher Assessors must check that timings of the music are accurate. The correct length of the composition should be calculated from where the music starts to when it stops rather than the total length of the audio track.

Assessment

For Component 2, the Teacher Assessor's application of the Assessment Criteria is mostly accurate. There are still cases where the judgment was deemed to be very optimistic. The most accurate marking occurred when detailed comments and musical references to highlight the key features of their candidates' compositions were included on the CAS. Where marks and comments did not match the equivalent level statements in the Assessment Grids, the marking was judged to be less accurate. Unfortunately, a few Teacher Assessors failed to include comments or wrote single word such as 'Excellent' or 'Very Good' to justify the marks they awarded their candidates.

Assessment grid 1: Developing musical ideas.

Teacher assessors should note the following:

- To achieve higher levels, musical ideas must demonstrate at least effective development *and* extension. Often layers were added with the main melodic material copied showing some development rather than considering the development of the whole ensemble.
- Once again, most candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the characteristics of the style of music they were composing for. The most successful compositions ensured that they were handled convincingly throughout the whole piece rather than in some sections.

- When responding to the Set Brief, some candidates only considered part of the requirements.
- For Set Brief 1 (Instrumental Music 1700-1820), was by far the most popular choice in 2024. The most successful candidates composed a clear solo part (for one soloist) and also developed and extended ideas within the accompaniment. They considered the occasion (an outdoor party) and made the required musical sequence prominent with the music. Where parts of the set brief were overlooked (eg. the occasion was not fully appropriate), the composition could only 'meet the brief in some respects' and so the overall mark for Assessment Grid 1 was slightly impacted.
- Many candidates who submitted a Set Brief 2 (Vocal Music) composition paid tribute to a person of significance either in the lyrics or by adding a brief commentary. Unfortunately, significant numbers overlooked the occasion, a celebration, so met the set brief 'in some respects'. The numbers of candidates selecting this set brief were comparable with 2023.
- Set Brief 3 (Music for stage and screen) was far less popular than in 2024. Candidates produced some imaginative compositions and even included video clips to accompany the music. Many captured 'slapstick' scenes in the music and fully explained the action on the stage that the music was conveying. The less successful responses overlooked the comedic element of the task.
- Set Brief 4 (Fusions), as in previous years, this task attracted the least submissions. There were some outstanding compositions where both cultures were given full consideration. Some just submitted a 12-bar blues composition or a dance composition and did not create the 'fusion' that the set brief required.

Assessment grid 2: Demonstrating technical control

Teacher Assessors should note the following:

- The most successful candidates showed a clear understanding of harmony, rhythm dynamics and melody to show secure control of the musical elements. In a significant number of cases, melodic writing relied heavily on repeating patterns and awkward harmonic progressions. The most interesting rhythmic ideas were evident in minimalist and Latin-American compositions.. Again in 2024, dynamic markings were given less attention in many compositions.
- All chosen musical forces within the compositions must be exploited idiomatically not just the main melody line. The most successful outcomes were when candidates had composed their instruments. They were able to demonstrate an understanding of the forces which they were writing for and exploit their potential imaginatively to create contrast within the music. Where pre-recorded samples are included in compositions, it is important that the commentary clearly outlines the candidates' musical input, especially if loops form a significant part of the piece.
- The most successful compositions varied the texture to create contrast in the music rather than relying too heavily on melody-dominated homophony.

Assessment grid 3: Composing with musical coherence.

Teacher assessors should note the following:

- When judging the coherence of the music, the whole composition needs to be considered.
- The most successful compositions demonstrated fluent transitions between each section of the music and clear contrast. Some opportunities to created contrast were missed because sections were copied exactly. For example, in a ternary structure, those candidates who developed and extended the A section

on its' return scored more highly than those who merely repeated the original music.

- Many compositions demonstrated a good sense of direction and wholeness. Most submissions showed a clear understanding of structural devices, especially in songs and classical structures (Ternary and Rondo Form). Once again, a significant number of compositions ended rather suddenly which left the music feeling incomplete.

Administration

The variety of formats of CAS made moderation challenging in 2024. For 1MU0-02, centres seemed to prefer the PDF versions of the CAS rather than the spreadsheet version. It was reported that an alarming number of centres submitted handwritten, photocopied versions of the CAS which generated significantly more work for the moderator to annotate.

Many centres completed the CAS to a high standard, but once again some Composition Outline boxes on page 2 did not include an audience or occasion for the composition.

IN 20024, only a few centres did not include the highest and lowest scoring candidates within their submission even if they were not part of the requested sample.

Once again, centres submitted materials in the incorrect format or files were not labelled as requested in the Administrative Support Guide (ASG).

Candidates and Teacher Assessors must acknowledge any stimulus material used within the composition process to avoid plagiarism being investigated. This includes the theme used in a Theme and Variation composition, any pre-recorded samples or loops and any other influences on the music.

When submitting rap-style compositions, candidates must acknowledge the formality of the GCSE process. Whilst, certain terms and phrases may be common in this genre, moderators reported there were some occasions where unacceptable levels of swearing and inappropriate language were included in the candidates' compositions. This occurred less in 2024 than in 2023.

Some centres had out-of-date or no contact information listed on the Pearson website which hindered moderators when they requested additional or missing materials.

Moving forward to 2025 centres should:

- Prepare students for both a free composition and a Set Brief composition for 2025.
- The 1MU0-02 Set Briefs for submission in May 2025 are published on the Pearson website from 1st September 2024.
- Refer to the 2025 Administrative Support Guide to ensure that work is submitted in the correct format and files are uploaded to the LWT with centre and candidate numbers (not student names).
- Submit 2025 CAS forms are typed and submitted **in the correct format** including an audience or occasion for each composition in the Composition Outline box on page 2.
- Check that the length for each composition and their total length are accurately recorded on the CAS.
- Submit a score or detailed commentary for each composition, including enough musical information to **replicate it by other performers**.
- Ensure recordings are ambient, balanced, at a good level.
- Check the work of the **highest** and **lowest**-scoring candidates is included within the requested sample. If they are not, add these to the submission.

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>

