



GCSE Music: Coursework Marking Training – Performance

Welcome to this Professional Development Training

This training supports teachers delivering Pearson Edexcel GCSE Music. The training covers coursework marking for the performance component.

You will:

- explore the performance assessment criteria
 - look at examples of assessment materials
 - carry out a marking exercise on exemplar materials covering a range of standards, instruments and musical styles
 - be able to ask our experienced trainer questions about the performance component.
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Agenda

In this session we are going to look at:

- Welcome and introduction
- Component 1 requirements
- Assessment Grids & Difficulty Levels
- Exemplar marking
- BREAK
- Exemplar marking
- Q&A session





Materials

To complete this training, the following materials are required:

- Assessment and DL Grids
- PAS files (PAS spreadsheet or PAS PDFs)
- Scores booklet
- Audio recordings of Solos 1–3 and Ensembles 1–3
- Difficulty Levels Booklet
- Difficulty Levels: Further Guidance for Ensemble Performance document
- Good quality amplifier, and speakers or headphones

Component 1 Requirements

Specification Overview

Component	Overview	Assessment
Component 1 Performing 30% NEA	2 performances at least 1 solo piece – minimum 1 minute at least 1 ensemble piece – minimum 1 minute Combined total duration minimum of 4 minutes	30 marks solo and 30 marks ensemble Total of 60 marks
Component 2 Composing 30% NEA	2 compositions 1 to set brief – minimum 1 minute 1 free composition – minimum 1 minute Combined total duration minimum of 3 minutes	2 pieces – 30 marks each Total of 60 marks
Component 3 Appraising 40% exam	4 Areas of Study with 2 set works <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instrumental Music 1700–1820• Vocal Music• Music for Stage and Screen• Fusions	Exam 1hr 45mins Total of 80 marks

Assessment Objectives

	Assessment Objective	Weighting
AO1	Perform with technical control, expression and interpretation	30%
AO2	Compose and develop musical ideas with technical control and coherence	30%
AO3	Demonstrate and apply musical knowledge	20%
AO4	Use appraising skills to make evaluative and critical judgements about music	20%

Performing Requirements – types of performance

- From a score (traditional)
- Improvisation
- Realising music using music technology
- Rapping
- Beatboxing
- Oral tradition
- Own composition

Performing Requirements – solo performance

- The student's part plays a significant or leading role.
- The music is distinctive and clearly recognisable in its individuality.
- The performance may be on any instrument or voice in any style or genre.
- Must be of at least **one minute** in duration.
- May comprise one or more pieces.

Performing Requirements – ensemble performance

- Must consist of two or more performers.
- Assessed part must be undoubled, simultaneously sounding, and independent for at least **one minute**.
- Performed with or without additional backing or accompaniment as appropriate.
- A solo with an accompanist is not acceptable as an ensemble unless the student being assessed is the accompanist.
- Backing tracks do not count towards a live instrumental part.
- Must be of at least **one minute** in duration.
- May comprise one or more pieces.

Performing Requirements – sources

Scores ([specification](#), p15–16)

- Where a written score or lead sheet exists, this must be submitted.
- If a piece has been learnt aurally, a professional reference recording may be submitted in addition to the score.
- If a written score or lead sheet does not exist, appropriate reference material must be submitted (a professional reference recording, written commentary, stimulus for improvised performances, track sheets, tables or diagrams).

Performing Requirements

- Combined performance length (solo + ensemble) is **four minutes**.
- For performances that **do not** meet the total minimum time requirement, the total performance mark will be reduced proportionally according to how many seconds the combined performance is less than four minutes.
- Performances that **do not** meet the minimum time requirement should be marked using the assessment grids.
- The mark reduction will be applied by Pearson during the moderation process ([specification](#), p81)
- Centres will be required to inform Pearson of students who do not meet the minimum time requirement.

Assessing Component 1

Assessment Grids

There are 3 assessment grids ([specification](#), p19–23):

- Technical control – technique
- Expression and interpretation
- Technical control (accuracy) and expression and interpretation (fluency)

Levels–based Mark Scheme

First decide which level the response should be placed in. This may include a 'best fit' approach.



If the response meets the requirements fully, then award the upper mark.



If the response just meets the requirements, then award the lower mark.



Where some requirements are met at above or below the 'best fit' level, this will indicate the mark within the level.

Difficulty Levels

- Difficulty levels are directly related to those set by the many bodies awarding practical grade examinations.
- Less difficult (Grade 3 and below), Standard (Grade 4), More difficult (Grade 5 and above).
- Selected pieces can be found in the [**Difficulty Levels Booklet**](#).
- To award a difficulty level for an ensemble performance the part should be compared to solo pieces.
- Descriptors for standard difficulty levels for ensemble performances can be found in the document, [**Difficulty levels: Further Guidance for Ensemble Performances**](#).
- Where a performance consists of 2 or more pieces, apply an average level.
- Marks are scaled using the difficulty levels grid ([specification](#), p25–6).

Performance: Solo 1

Performance: Solo 1

1. Listen to Solo 1 (Flute) at least twice.
2. Compare the performance to the score.
3. Award a best fit mark for each assessment grid.
4. Award difficulty level 5+ (more difficult), Bagatelle is listed in the [Difficulty Levels Booklet](#) (row 211).
5. Calculate Total Marks by adding up AG marks, then scale Raw Mark using difficulty levels grid (*PAS spreadsheet calculates marks automatically*).
6. Measure performance length.

A:1

Bagatelle

Op. 119 No. 1

Arranged by David Blackwell

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Allegretto [♩ = c.132]



to make unauthorized copies of this copyright music.

Performance: Solo 1

Performance length and difficulty level

- 0:01-2:07 = 2:06

Length		Min(s)	2	Sec(s)	06
Difficulty level	Difficulty Level 5+ (More Difficult)				
Difficulty level justification	DLB 5 = r211				

Performance: Solo 1 – assessment grids

Grid 1: Technical control - Technique	3/4 mostly convincing but loss in control b48 3 slightly beyond, eg control of rit. b35-8, final note not controlled 3 good tone but lacks sensitive contrast, odd intonation issue	6
Grid 2: Expression and interpretation	3 appropriate tempo but rushes b19, rit. starts too early (b34) 3 some dynamic markings omitted, eg forte b49, dynamic shaping omitted in last 3 bars 3 shaping not always successful	6
Grid 3: Technical control (accuracy) and expression and interpretation (fluency)	4 3 broken phrasing eg b5, b14 disrupts fluency / musical coherence	7
Raw Mark		19
Total Marks (after scaling, page 25-6 of specification)		29

Performance: Solo 2

Performance: Solo 2

1. Listen to Solo 2 (Voice) at least twice.
2. Compare the performance to the score.
3. Award a best fit mark for each assessment grid.
4. Award difficulty level 2 (less difficult), I Need a Dollar is listed in the [Difficulty Levels Booklet](#), Popular Voice (row 396).
5. Calculate Total Marks by adding up AG marks, then scale Raw Mark using difficulty levels grid.
6. Measure performance length.

CUS NGs

I NEED A DOLLAR

demo backing

Aloe Blacc

Words and Music by Jeffrey Silverman, Leon Michels, Nicholas Mowbray and Aloe Blacc

♩ = 100 Soul

Dm C/D Gm/D Dm C/D Gm/D



Performance: Solo 2

Performance length and difficulty level

- 0:01-1:36 = 1:35

Length		Min(s)	1	Sec(s)	35
Difficulty level	Difficulty Level 2 (Less Difficult)				
Difficulty level justification	DLB 2 = r396				

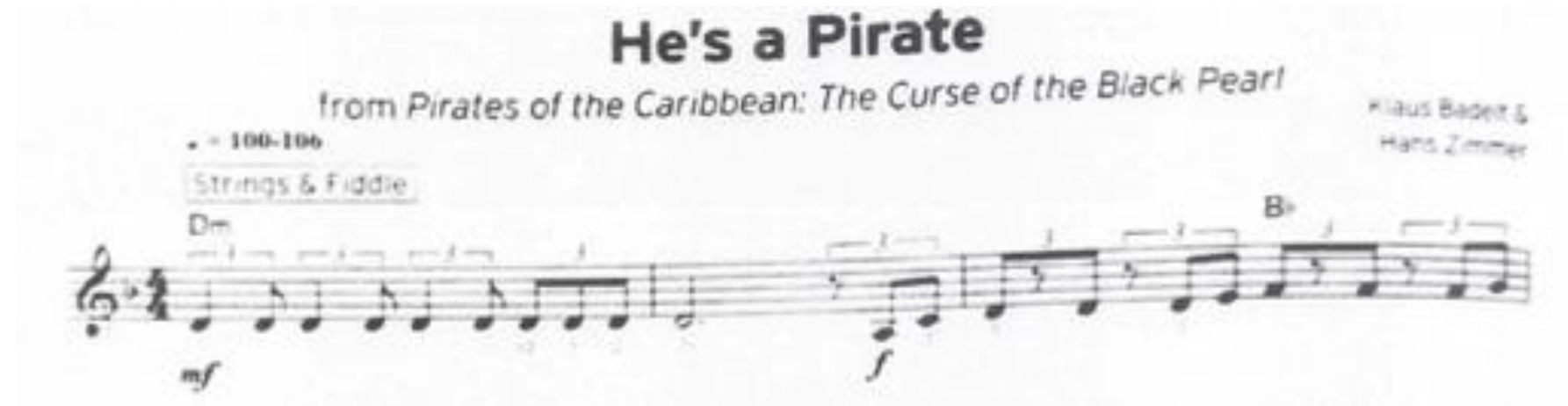
Performance: Solo 2 – assessment grids

Grid 1: Technical control - Technique (Max 6)	1/2 poor to limited breath control, voice lacks support 2 moments where beyond, eg bar 29 to end 1/2 tone is thin and intonation is mostly poor	3
Grid 2: Expression and interpretation	4 appropriate tempo throughout 1/2 no dynamic contrast but limited articulation and shaping of phrases 1/2 overall, struggles to communicate	3
Grid 3: Technical control (accuracy) and expression and interpretation (fluency)	1/2 noticeable errors and omissions begin to impact on success 2 whilst coherence is lost the performance is reasonably fluent	3
Raw Mark		9
Total Marks (after scaling, page 25-6 of specification)		9

Performance: Solo 3

Performance: Solo 3

1. Listen to Solo 3 (Electronic Keyboard) at least twice.
2. Compare the performance to the score.
3. Award a best fit mark for each assessment grid.
4. Award difficulty level 4 (standard), He's a Pirate is listed in the [Difficulty Levels Booklet](#) (row 55).
5. Calculate then scale the raw mark using difficulty levels grid.
6. Measure performance length.



Performance: Solo 3

Performance length and difficulty level

- 0:00-1:48 = 1:48

Length		Min(s)	1	Sec(s)	48
Difficulty level	Difficulty Level 4 (Standard)				
Difficulty level justification	DLB 4 = r55				

Performance: Solo 3 – assessment grids

Grid 1: Technical control - Technique	1/2 limited to poor overall, first 3 lines demonstrate basic control 1 beyond current ability (for majority) 2 fails to change patch sound	3
Grid 2: Expression and interpretation	2 under-tempo (85bpm) but consistent 2 no dynamic contrast, some succesful articulation/ shaping although staccato elongated at phrase ends (best fit 2) 2 struggles to communicate	4
Grid 3: Technical control (accuracy) and expression and interpretation (fluency)	1 LH chord errors impact, RH pitch and rhythm errors impact less 3 mostly coherent despite RH stubmbles on p2	4
Raw Mark		11
Total Marks (after scaling, page 25-6 of specification)		14

Performance: Ensemble 1

Performance: Ensemble 1

1. Listen to Ensemble 1 (Double Bass) at least twice.
2. Compare the performance to the score.
3. Award a best fit mark for each assessment grid.
4. Award a difficulty level using the **String** descriptors, (p2) in the [Difficulty Levels: Further Guidance for Ensemble Performances](#) document
5. Calculate Total Marks by adding up AG marks, then scale Raw Mark using difficulty levels grid.
6. Measure performance length.



Performance: Ensemble 1

Guidance document (standard level) statements, **STRINGS**

GCSE	A Level
<p>At standard level it is likely that the music will include most of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Co-ordination of the left hand and the bow2. Changes of left hand position3. Varied rhythmic patterns4. Some control of dynamic contrasts and articulation5. Some interplay with the other part(s)	<p>At standard level it is likely that the music will include most of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A range of bowing techniques2. More frequent changes of left hand position3. Complex rhythmic patterns4. Sophisticated control of dynamics and articulation5. Exposed lines or frequent interplay with the other part(s)

Key

+ meets A Level (more difficult) =/+ beyond GCSE (more difficult) = meets GCSE (standard)
-/= partially meets GCSE (less difficult) - does not meet GCSE (less difficult)

Performance: Ensemble 1

Performance length and difficulty level

- 0:01–3:26 = 3:25

Length		Min(s)	3	Sec(s)	25
Difficulty level	Difficulty Level 5+ (More Difficult)				
Difficulty level justification	FG ++ =/+++ fast bowing techniques (for bass), frequent LH changes (up to 5th position), repeated semiquavers (challenging for bass), subtle dynamic shaping and range of articulation, exposed line				

Performance: Ensemble 1 – assessment grids

Grid 1: Technical control - Technique	4 4 4/3 sensitive tonal contrast but with occasional slight intonation slips	7
Grid 2: Expression and interpretation	4 4 4 4	8
Grid 3: Technical control (accuracy) and expression and interpretation (fluency)	2 minor/noticeable slips in pitch (solo): b 45, 48, 51, 54 and 56 4 4	7
Raw Mark		22
Total Marks (after scaling, page 25-6 of specification)		30

Performance: Ensemble 2

Performance: Ensemble 2

1. Listen to Ensemble 2 (French Horn) at least twice.
2. Compare the performance to the score.
3. Award a best fit mark for each assessment grid.
4. Award a difficulty level using the **Brass** descriptors, (p2) in the [Difficulty Levels: Further Guidance for Ensemble Performances](#) document, for each piece then apply an average.
5. Calculate Total Marks by adding up AG marks, then scale Raw Mark using difficulty levels grid.
6. Measure performance length.



Performance: Ensemble 2

Guidance document (standard level) statements, **BRASS**

GCSE	A Level
<p>At standard level it is likely that the music will include most of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A pitch range greater than an octave, not all in an easy register for the instrument2. Some melodic leaps3. Varied rhythmic patterns4. Some control of dynamic contrasts and articulation5. Phrasing that requires some breath control6. Some interplay with the other part(s)	<p>At standard level it is likely that the music will include most of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A pitch range greater than a 12th, possibly even using the full range of the instrument, requiring some dexterity in the use of valves/side2. More frequent or awkward leaps3. Complex rhythmic patterns4. Sophisticated control of dynamics and articulation5. Phrasing that requires good breath control, such as long sustained phrases or faster passage-work6. Exposed lines or frequent interplay with the other part(s)

Key

+ meets A Level (more difficult) =/+ beyond GCSE (more difficult) = meets GCSE (standard)
-/= partially meets GCSE (less difficult) - does not meet GCSE (less difficult)

Performance: Ensemble 2

Performance length and difficulty level

- No. 3 0:00–0:47 = 0:47, No. 4 0:50–1:26 = 0:36. **TOTAL = 1:23**

Length		Min(s)	1	Sec(s)	23
Difficulty level	Difficulty Level 5+ (More Difficult)				
Difficulty level justification	No. 3 =/+ (8ve but beyond easy register) = = + + DL 5+ due to range up to high G (0:47) No. 4 =/+ (11th) =/+ (5th, 6th, 8ve, chromaticism) = = + + DL4 - (borderline DL4/5 - easier range) (0:36) DL5+ overall, longer piece is 5+ (range of 2 pieces = 2 octaves)				

Performance: Ensemble 2 – assessment grids

Grid 1: Technical control - Technique	3 basic control, good breath control but some split notes and late speaking note (No. 3 b9, 13, 32) 3 low G (No. 4) is beyond 3 good tone through the range (not controlled No. 3 b17-18), marginal intonation slips	6
Grid 2: Expression and interpretation	4 3 odd missed dynamic shaping (eg end of No. 4), well phrased, articulation slips (eg No.3 bar 5, No. 4 b13) 3 some involvement 4	6
Grid 3: Technical control (accuracy) and expression and interpretation (fluency)	2 mis-pitching (No. 3 b5, No.4: first note, b3 beat 2), (No. 4 b7 low G does not speak - assessed in AG1), early entry No.3 b25 4 4	7
Raw Mark		19
Total Marks (after scaling, page 25-6 of specification)		29

Performance: Ensemble 3

Performance: Ensemble 3

1. Listen to Ensemble 3 (Piano) at least twice.
2. Assess the performance, consult the stimulus.
3. Award a best fit mark for each assessment grid.
4. Award a difficulty level using the **Piano** descriptors, (p1) in [Difficulty Levels: Further Guidance for Ensemble Performances](#) document.
5. Calculate Total Marks by adding up AG marks, then scale Raw Mark using difficulty levels grid.
6. Measure performance length.

Ensemble Performance - Latin Improv

For the Ensemble I played my free composition, a Brazilian influenced Bossa Nova piece.

I played it on the piano with the accompaniment of jazz style/Brazilian drums.

Performance: Ensemble 3

Guidance document (standard level) statements, **PIANO**

GCSE	A Level
At standard level it is likely that the music will include most of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Some independence between the hands2. Changes of hand position3. Varied rhythmic patterns4. Some control of dynamic contrasts and articulation5. Use of the sustaining pedal if appropriate6. Some interplay with other part(s)	At standard level it is likely that the music will include most of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Complete independence between the hands2. Frequent changes of hand position3. Complex rhythmic patterns4. Sophisticated control of dynamics and articulation5. Appropriate and effective use of the sustaining pedal6. Exposed lines or frequent interplay with other part(s)

Key

+ meets A Level (more difficult) =/+ beyond GCSE (more difficult) = meets GCSE (standard)
-/= partially meets GCSE (less difficult) - does not meet GCSE (less difficult)

Performance: Ensemble 3

Performance length and difficulty level

- 0:03–1:35 = 1:32





Length		Min(s)	1	Sec(s)	32
Difficulty level	Difficulty Level 5+ (More Difficult)				
Difficulty level justification	FG =/+ =/+ + = = + majority are beyond standard some independent RH voicing, some fast hand position changes, some complex rhythms, some contrast in dynamics and articulation (displayed), use of sustain pedal, exposed line				

Performance: Ensemble 3 – assessment grids

Grid 1: Technical control - Technique	3 uncontrolled broken chord at 8s and marginal loss in control at 47s 4 4	7
Grid 2: Expression and interpretation	3/4 slightly uneven tempo 3 some dynamics, limited use of staccato (see stimulus), phrasing is generally well-shaped 3 some involvement, some unsuccessful moments 3 some awareness of balance with other performer	6
Grid 3: Technical control (accuracy) and expression and interpretation (fluency)	4 3 some development of the stimulus but formulaic/repetitive towards end 3 good reaction to the ensemble (mostly in time with each other), not coordinated at end	6
Raw Mark		19
Total Marks (after scaling, page 25-6 of specification)		29

Candidate Overview

Combined Length and Total Marks

	Candidate name	Candidate number	Teacher/Assessor name	Combined length	Total Marks	Admin	Included in sample 
1	Candidate One	0001	Delegate	5:31	59		
2	Candidate Two	0002	Delegate	2:58	38		
3	Candidate Three	0003	Delegate	3:20	43		

Q&A

Principal's Feedback

Principal's Feedback – scores

Try to ensure scores are:

- a single PDF file for each performance
- readable
- with all pages present (in correct orientation and in order)
- annotated with deviations agreed with the teacher assessor
- annotated where bars / sections are omitted.



[Examiner's Report – Paper 1](#)

Principal's Feedback – recordings

Try to ensure recordings are:

- made with (high quality) external microphone
- ambient rather than close-mic and/or multi-tracked
- with level set appropriately, too high (creates distortion)
- with balance equal between the student and other part(s)
- with automatic gain/microphone control (levelling) disabled
- without announcements (these are no longer required)
- submitted in .wav, .aif/.aiff, (data compressed formats .m4a/.mp4 or .mp3 should have a minimum bit rate of 256kbs)
- video files submitted in .mp4, .mov or .avi file formats.

Reminders

- Deadline for submission is **15 May** each year.
- Prepare students for both solo and ensemble performance.
- Refer to the [Administrative Support Guide](#).
- Submit PAS spreadsheet or PAS PDFs.
- Submit a written score where one exists. Where a piece is learned aurally, a professional reference recording may be submitted in addition.
- Label files with centre and candidate numbers (not student names).
- Ensure length of each performance and combined length are accurately recorded on the PAS.
- Inform Pearson of students who do not meet the minimum combined length requirement (4 minutes) by completing the online declaration form.
- Check the work of the **highest** and **lowest** scoring candidate is included within the requested sample. If they are not, add these to the submission.

Summary and support

Summary

In this session we looked at the following objectives:

- explore the performance assessment criteria
- look at examples of assessment materials
- carry out a marking exercise on exemplar materials covering a range of standards, instruments and musical styles
- be able to ask our experienced trainer questions about the performance component.

Subject Advisor Support

Music and Music Technology
Jeffery Hole



Our subject advisors are experts in their fields and are here to support you throughout the year.

Email: teachingmusic@pearson.com

Phone: +44 (0) 344 463 2535 (Mon–Fri, 9:00–17:00)

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The following services are included as part of your qualification fees:



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An online resource bank of past paper questions and support materials, enabling you to create customised mock exams and tests tailored to your students' needs.



ResultsPlus

An online results analysis tool that provides a detailed breakdown of students' performance in our exams, helping you identify areas for improvement and track progress effectively.



Access To Scripts

An online service that allows you to view and download your candidates' marked scripts. This tool offers transparency and insight into the marking process.



Mocks Service

We offer a paid service for mocks, including paper-based and onscreen assessments. Marked by examiners, results are uploaded to ResultsPlus for detailed analysis to aid student progression and teacher training. Note that this service is not available for all subjects; please check availability for your specific subject.

Find out more

For more professional development courses please see [Pearson's Professional Development Academy](#).



Following this event, you will receive a survey to share your thoughts about the session. Please let us know what you'd like to see more of and what areas could be improved.





Thank you.