



Pearson  
Edexcel

Moderator's Report  
Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2023

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

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## **Introduction**

2023 saw the second year of external moderation following the pandemic, full requirements were in place.

It was also the second year of submitting work using the Learner Work Transfer portal, upload and download time was much faster.

Centres continue to spend a considerable amount time preparing materials for submission. Most work was well presented and accurately marked. Quality of administration continued to improve.

## **Performance of Candidates**

Students achieved across the full mark range. There was an increase in the percentage of students achieving high marks compared to previous years, despite impact of disrupted learning.

There were many impressive, well-rehearsed and mature performances which demonstrated a high level of ability. Of note were a duet of Ivor Novello's *We'll Gather Lilacs*, a bassoon quartet of *Baby Elephant Walk* and a duet of Mozart's *Piano Concerto No. 17, 1st movement*. Moderators were also impressed by cello, harp, flute, recorder, trumpet, French horn, military drum, drum kit, harmonium, Carnatic voice, (solo) musical theatre and classical vocal performances.

Of the work sampled by moderators, piano performances (30%) were most common, just over 1% percent lower than last year. Followed by voice (25%), electric guitar (8%), drum kit (6.9%) and violin (5.8%). Since 2019, piano, strings and guitar family have become more popular. Voice, woodwind and brass have declined. It was pleasing though to see an increase in the number of oboe, bassoon, French horn, tuba, mallet percussion, recorder and rap submissions.

Performances moderated at less difficult were significantly less in number than standard and more difficult. Most candidates selected pieces at an appropriate level and scored equally on both performances. Where pieces were too challenging, performances often demonstrated a lack of fluency and accuracy.

A small number of students were disadvantaged because the accompaniment was omitted from their solo performance.

Selection and preparation of ensemble pieces continued to disadvantage a small number of students, moderators found:

- difficulty level was lower than solo
- performance was less well prepared than solo
- piece selected did not contain enough ensemble playing
- the same ensemble piece was used to assess all students.

Theatre-style duets submitted for ensemble caused concern. Melodic lines are often sung separately with relatively few bars containing genuine ensemble singing. In addition, ensemble performances facilitated by another instrument added to the piano accompaniment, where not originally scored, provide little opportunity for ensemble interaction.

## **Assessment**

Accuracy of teacher assessment is improving. The vast majority of work sampled contained helpful comments relating to wording of the assessment grids. However, few teacher assessors expand on wording by making specific reference to the performance itself (for example, bar numbers where there are errors).

Marking was less accurate where assessment grid statements were not taken into consideration, the wording of the grids was not referred to, or few or no comments were made. It was noted that teacher assessors occasionally omitted comments that highlight statements outside the overall level of the mark awarded for that grid.

There was reluctance to award full marks where performances met all statements within an assessment grid.

Whilst standard of marking had improved, the following should be considered:

### Assessment grid 1:

- apply mark restrictions for pre-difficulty level 1 to difficulty level 2
- apply intonation statement to assessment grid 1 only

### Assessment grid 2:

- comment on ensemble balance
- acknowledge under-tempo performances
- credit dynamics, phrasing and articulation with care, take into account missed opportunities

### Assessment grid 3:(fluency)

- comment on ensemble reaction
- consider pitch and rhythmic errors with care, compare performance to the score
- do not apply intonation statement (grid 1) to this grid.

## **Difficulty Levels**

Approximately half of submissions referred to the Difficulty Levels Booklet. Most submissions that did not refer to the Booklet had consulted graded exam syllabuses, resulting in occasional error. Where submissions did not refer to the published level or grade, levels awarded were often found to be incorrect.

Most difficulty levels amended by moderators were for ensembles. The percentage of difficulty levels amended was much greater than 2022, although similar to 2019.

Very few centres made use of the Difficulty levels: Further Guidance for Ensemble Performances document to support justification for both solo and ensemble pieces. This document may be used where pieces are not listed in the Difficulty Levels Booklet or graded exam syllabuses. Use of this document is encouraged.

## **Administration**

Moderation was straightforward when all files were present and labelled correctly.

### Performance Authentication Sheet (PAS)

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

- each page was submitted a single PDF file
- Adobe 'Fill & Sign' was used to authenticate PDFs
- scanned PDF was submitted in incorrect orientation
- piece was named incorrectly, or partially (for example, opus number omitted)
- difficulty level awarded was not clear
- role in ensemble was not clear
- other parts in ensemble were omitted.

### Performance Length

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

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

A significant number of submissions were found to be less than four minutes' combined duration, despite centres stating threshold had been met. In addition, many under length submissions were found to be shorter than centre measurement.

## Scores

A score or lead sheet is required, where one exists. The vast majority of scores submitted contained all necessary information to assess the performance. Centres should note, scores should be:

- 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.

## Recordings

This year saw variability in quality of recordings. Recordings made using low bit rates and/or poor microphone choice, such as an internal microphone in a tablet, were often difficult to moderate. The student's part should be clear and audible throughout:

- 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. Performances that comprise more than one piece must be recorded together.

## **Moving forward centres should:**

- Refer to the 2024 [Administrative Support Guide](#)
- Submit up to date PAS [forms](#)
- 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)
  - Additional Pieces Difficulty Levels list (indicate row number)
  - Graded exams (ABRSM, Trinity, LCM, RockschooL, 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
- 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
- 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>