



# Pearson

## GCSE Music: An explanation of the assessment grids for Composition

Two compositions are submitted: one to a brief which has been set by Pearson, and another that is a free composition set by the student. Both compositions are weighted the same (15% each).

A new requirement for this specification is composition written to one of the four briefs set by Pearson. The topic briefs are:

- Brief 1 – Instrumental Music 1700-1820
- Brief 2 – Vocal Music
- Brief 3 – Music for Stage and Screen
- Brief 4 – Fusions

The total composition time across both pieces must be a minimum of three minutes of music.

Each composition is assessed using the three assessment grids published on pages 30 to 32 of the Specification. Each grid has five levels. Each grid is marked out of 10, giving a total mark of 30 for each composition.

### **Grid One: Developing Musical Ideas**

This grid concerns the development of musical ideas, the stylistic characteristics and conventions leading to the student's response to reflect on:

- the response to the brief set by Pearson OR
- (for a free composition) the extent to which the composition meets the student's intended purpose, style, audience or occasion.

Level 1 allows for work where ideas and their development are limited.

At Level 2 the work may have some obtrusive misjudgements that compromise the effectiveness of the piece, whilst at Level 3 any misjudgements, whilst obvious, will not compromise the overall result.

Compositions at Level 4 will demonstrate development and effective handling of conventions so that the music is generally fluent and has a sense of wholeness, whilst Level 5 is available for those compositions that show imagination and assurance throughout.

### **Grid Two: Demonstrating technical control**

This grid concerns the control of the relevant musical elements, use of the instruments and Texture within the composition:

- Organisation of pitch (melody and/or harmony)
- Tonality

- Tempo, metre and rhythm
- Dynamics

(NB: Structure is covered in Grid three so is not considered here).

When assessing compositions using this grid, examiners will consider the use of the musical elements, the handling of forces and textures, and the use of devices and conventions appropriate to the given style (for example, effective use of modulation in a classical tonal idiom, or an imaginative pre-chorus in a pop song).

The descriptors at Level 1 and 5 allow for work submitted at the extremes of the range. At Level 2 there will still be obvious misjudgements in the handling of elements and stylistic devices. Whilst there will still be misjudgements at Level 3 the music will have a sense of fluency suggested by the phrase “generally secure”. Any misjudgements at Level 4 will be minor.

### **Grid Three: Composing with musical coherence**

This grid concerns use of structure and combination of musical elements to achieve musical coherence and fluency.

When assessing compositions using this grid, examiners will consider the use of the structure, sense of balance and proportion as well as the use of repetition and contrast with a clear sense of direction.

The descriptors at Level 1 and 5 allow for work submitted at the extremes of the range. At Level 2 there will be attempt to use a basic structure with contrast and fluency unconvincing in parts. Whilst there will still be misjudgements at Level 3 the music will have a sense of fluency suggested by the phrase “for the most part”. Any misjudgements at Level 4 will be minor.

The new specification contains some administrative differences that centres need to be aware of:

- The composition briefs will be released on the 1<sup>st</sup> September at the start of the year of certification (year 11) and must reach the examiner by 15<sup>th</sup> May.
- Total composition time which is under-length will receive no marks (the stated composition length must be the length of the music performed, not including students introducing themselves and the instruments at the start, pauses between piece, tuning, etc.)
- For the free composition, students must clearly indicate the intended purpose or style of the piece and the audience or occasion for which it is intended.
- Students do not need to perform their composition.

### **Definitions of obvious and obtrusive (wherever they appear in the grids):**

Obvious – clearly noticeable but acceptable

Obtrusive – clearly noticeable and unacceptable.