Component 3 – Responding to a Music Brief FAQs

Can I release the brief to learners/discuss the contents of the brief with learners before the start of the 4 hours preparatory period?

No. You must not share the details or discuss the brief with learners until they begin the 4 hours of preparatory time.

Can I download material and save it for all learners to access on a local drive in my centre?

No. Learners must work independently to find the resources they need to produce their musical outcome. It isn't appropriate for teachers to gather the resources for learners in a central place to then access.

Can I direct learners to where they can find resources during the assessment?

No. Learners must work independently to find the resources they need to produce their musical outcome. Although, during teaching and learning you may have discussed sources for research it wouldn't be appropriate to give details during the assessment.

What are "relevant resources"?

Learners should prepare relevant resources that they need to support their creation of the product. This would include the original audio recording of the piece, vocal stems, loops, samples, music notation, chord charts and videos showing scrolling notation, such as Synthesia. It would not be allowed to download and save "How to…" guides.

What can I do if websites/resources my learners try to access are blocked by our centre IT settings?

If learners can access a website but can't download material, it would be appropriate for the learner to ask you, as their teacher, to download the material for them that can then be saved in their secure digital folder.

If a learner is unable to access a website but from a web search is able to see it contains a relevant resource. It would be appropriate for you, as their teacher, to download the material for them that can then be saved in their secure digital folder.

Can learners use MIDI files?

It is not encouraged for learners to use MIDI files. Importing whole sections of music from a MIDI file would gain very little credit as the learner has not produced the music. If a whole cohort is importing large amounts of MIDI data, then this could trigger a malpractice investigation.

It is possible for a learner to use short sections of MIDI, such as a bass riff or melodic fragment. However, if a learner inputs the part themselves it is more creditworthy.

Can learners use audio stems/samples?

Learners are able to use audio stems and samples. However, as with the case of MIDI files there would be very little creditworthy material if the whole part was imported. Learners would need to edit and manipulate any stems any samples and use these stylistically in their piece to gain credit.

Can learners research outside of the 4 hours preparatory time?

Learners are unable to bring in material or take material out of the controlled conditions. Therefore, they can't generate notes from any research they do outside of the controlled conditions. However, there is nothing to stop them carrying out further research that they could recall without notes to find resources in the preparatory period.

Can learners have other learners perform parts for them?

Yes. It is possible for learners to ask other musicians to perform parts for them. However, they must only perform the part as created by the learner being assessed. For example, if a learner creates a chord chart with block chords in each bar, this should be played on beat 1 and held for the bar.

Can I play parts for a learner?

Yes. As with other learners performing parts, the part must be performed as created by the learner being assessed.

Can learners perform as an ensemble?

Learners can perform in an ensemble. However, each learner must create their own individual response to the brief by creating the parts and instructing the other musicians what to play.

It isn't appropriate for an ensemble to perform one piece and for each learner to be assessed on the part they perform.