

Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2012

GCE Music (6MU01)
Performing Music

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Publications Code US032727

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The overall standard of submissions for this unit in 2012 was consistent with that heard in recent years, and, once again, included a number of outstanding performances at this level. Very few performances were inadequate but some submissions were penalised for being under-length. **Centres are reminded that five to six minutes of music is required for this unit, not including tuning and gaps between pieces.** Centres are also reminded that the performance must be continuous and unedited.

Performance from score / Improvisation

Even more performances than in previous years were from score, with the number of improvisations and, to a greater extent, ensembles, declining once again this year.

Instruments

The most popular instruments this year were, once again, piano, voice, and guitar, these accounting for almost 60% of submissions (up significantly on previous years). The number of percussionists appears to have declined again this year.

Difficulty Levels

Most performances were above the Standard Level (Grade 5), with More Difficult (Grade 6) being the most common difficulty level. Performances below Standard Level were uncommon. Centres are reminded that the Edexcel Difficulty Level Booklet is available on the website as a reference document and this has been recently revised. Moderators reported some concerns about difficulty levels, often with pieces that were already listed in this booklet.

Assessment criteria

The application of the assessment criteria by teacher examiners was sound in the great majority of cases (with a small improvement on last year), but occasionally marking was a little generous, particularly where performances that did not merit such high marks were placed in the top two holistic bands. This was most often the case with assessment criteria 1, 4, and/or 5. The number of centres over-rewarding candidates' submissions appeared to be slightly fewer this year.

Common problems

Many candidates are submitting performances of music that is beyond their current technical ability. Struggling to cope with technical problems usually means that they are unable to shape the music satisfactorily, whereas they could probably have produced a truly musical performance of a slightly easier piece. Moderators noted the following general trends when instrumental performances had been over rewarded:

- otherwise fluent performances were marred by significant hesitations or omissions
- poor intonation (usually sharp)

Presentation

Most centres took great care over the presentation of candidates' work. Most recordings were of very good quality, well balanced, and usually submitted on CD.

Accompaniments

A small number of performances were compromised, as in previous years, by poor accompaniments that did not support the work of the candidate. Where a backing track is used as an accompaniment centres should endeavour, where possible, to ensure that there are no audible metronome clicks once the performance has begun.

Contact with centres

When moderators had to contact centres because of a problem, such as a missing score, for example, the response was almost always swift and helpful, which greatly aided the moderation process. Moderators reported that more centres had to be contacted directly this year and the following were the most common problems:

- application of an incorrect Difficulty Level (not using the level indicated in the Edexcel booklet)
- not penalizing a short submission
- lack of an authentication signature
- an unfinished CD that will not play on a CD player
- incorrect arithmetic
- inadequate or incomplete scores

Scores

Centres are reminded that scores submitted should have sufficient detail for a fair assessment to be made, particularly regarding accuracy of pitch and rhythm. When inadequate scores were submitted, centres were contacted to provide a suitable replacement. Reference recordings cannot be submitted in lieu of a score for this unit.

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