



Pearson
Edexcel

Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel GCE
Music (8MU0)
Paper 02: Composing

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for all papers can be found on the website at:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>

Summer 2019

Publications Code 8MU0_02_1906_ER

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2019

This was the third year of the lifetime of the current Specification but there was an important change from the first two years. This was in respect of the rule that under-length submissions received zero marks. Examiners were very pleased to hear that Ofqual had decided in the early part of this year to relax this requirement and to allow the various examining boards to decide how to implement a sliding scale of penalties according to the length of any short-fall.

Even so, there was still a number of submissions where the length of the compositions did not meet the requirements of the Specification. For AS Level, these are a minimum of two minutes for each individual composition but a minimum of four and a half minutes for the two pieces combined. Candidates who had problems with this generally reached the two minutes for each piece but, for whatever reason, were unable to meet the extra half minute for the combined total.

The Composing Authentication Sheet which centres are required to complete and which candidates are required to sign calls for the duration of each piece individually to be noted and also the combined total length for the two compositions. These figures are by no means always accurate. Perhaps it is not clear to all that it is the length of the piece which should be noted and not, for example, the total length of the track on which it is recorded, which may well be longer.

Candidates would be well advised to consider this matter when planning their pieces from an early stage. A last-minute intervention to try to add a few seconds to a piece of music may not be the best way to ensure that work reaches the required minimum lengths. An exaggerated *rallentando*, an extra repeat or other adjustment of this kind may well have implications for the structure of the composition and result in a lower mark for one of the assessment grids. It should be in a candidate's mind from an early stage whether both pieces are going to be at least two and a quarter minutes in length or whether one of them is to be perhaps two and a half minutes or more.

There is one further area where many candidates seem to need further help with their planning before a single note is put on paper or on the computer. That is in respect of Free Compositions. Almost all candidates choose to offer a Free Composition in addition to the one to a set Edexcel brief rather than two Compositions to set briefs. That is perfectly acceptable. However, all candidates should be aware that whether or not a piece is to a set brief it will be assessed against the same marking scheme as the piece to a set brief.

This means that as part of the assessment under Grid 2, a Free Composition will be considered in the light of the brief that the candidate has him/herself designed. The relevant part of the CAS gives space for information concerning purpose, style, audience and occasion. Candidates are advised to give careful thought to this and to bear in mind how their composition meets the requirements of their own brief.

Equally, some candidates seemed not to have paid enough attention to all the details of the set briefs. For example, candidates who had clearly given some thought as to how to show off the potential of the string quartet to an audience which was unfamiliar with chamber music (Brief 2 - Instrumental Music) were given greater credit than those who appeared to have

given no consideration to that aspect of the brief.

It was pleasing to see a fairly even spread of candidates choosing one of the first four options among the six set briefs. The topics of these four briefs appeared to be approached with some enthusiasm by many candidates. In the case of the other two briefs, Fusions and New Directions, it was probably the nature of the technical demands more than the particular contexts of the briefs that proved less attractive.

The examiners for this component felt that the work seen this year was a little less competent than last year and this is borne out by a small drop in the mean mark. However, it is important to add that the range was as wide as ever, with a few excellent submissions.

One area where there seemed to be some improvement was in the quality of notation, though candidates should remember to look through their scores carefully where computers may have strange ideas as to the appropriate accidentals to use in a given situation. Because a computer prints a note as A sharp, for example, does not mean that that is the correct or clearest way to notate the tonic of B flat major. There were still plenty of examples of these two accidentals appearing in the same arpeggio or even as consecutive notes. A few candidates still need to learn the conventions when setting out a number of instrumental parts in a score. Candidates are reminded that it is a requirement to produce a score of their work, though other acceptable forms of notation and information are given in the Specification.

We thank all centres for the care they have given to the administration involved in this component. There are just a few centres where it would be good to have clear track lists for recordings and properly labelled CDs or USB sticks. The latter in particular can be difficult to label - often the best way is to tie a luggage label or similar to the stick, with the Centre number clearly written on it.

Michael Nicholas, Principal Examiner.

Pearson Education Limited. Registered company number 872828
with its registered office at 80 Strand, London, WC2R 0RL, United Kingdom