



Pearson

Moderator's Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2018

**Pearson Edexcel Level 1/Level
2 GCSE (9-1) Music (1MUO)**

Component 2 (Composing)

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Introduction

This is the first year of the 1MU0 specification and it is pleasing to note that many centres have successfully embraced the new requirements to produce a wide range of interesting and creative compositions. The overall standard remains high and the care and attention paid to the presentation of the centre's submissions is greatly appreciated.

For the first time, students are expected to respond to a brief set by Pearson as well as submit a free composition where the total time requirement for both pieces of work must be a minimum of 3 minutes. The briefs were related to each of the areas of study and released on the 1st September in the academic year of certification. Whilst the majority of students were encouraged to explore a variety of musical starting points based on their own interests and musical experiences, a significant number of centres still submitted portfolios where each candidate selected the same brief and their free compositions were all based on the same brief or musical genre. Where students failed to meet the minimum time requirement, they were awarded zero marks for this component.

Performance of Candidates

The full range of marks were achieved by students. It was a pleasure to moderate such creative and imaginative compositions across a wide range of musical genres. Most moderators felt that the standard of work was similar to the previous specification.

Occasionally, students submitted individual compositions lasting over 5 minutes where the total specification requirement for this component is 3 minutes. This type of work often tends to be self-penalising.

Responses to the Set Brief.

For the 2018 series, moderators reported that the most popular brief by far was Brief 2 (Vocal Music). Students were able to write successfully for a solo voice with an accompaniment. It was pleasing to note that many centres took the trouble to make live recordings of the vocal line rather than submit synthesized sounds. Often where synthesized vocal parts were submitted word setting was an issue, particularly with melismatic writing. Some students wrote a song but did not really consider whether the lyrical content was appropriate for a school concert. In many cases, candidates who selected Brief 2 also submitted a song with a very similar brief for their 'Free' composition.

As anticipated, there was also a good response to Brief 1 (Instrumental Music 1700-1820). The most successful submissions carefully considered the occasion and wrote challenging parts for the soloist whilst developing and extending theme A on repetition. Some students composed only for solo instruments eg piano or wrote an ensemble piece where it was difficult to detect the soloist's role.

The third most popular response was Brief 3 (Music for Stage and Screen). The highest scoring compositions fully considered the musical elements and

imaginatively developed and extended their ideas to create tension within the music. Where the response was less successful, students reflected the conflict element of the brief but often failed to consider the contrasting natures of the gangs and/or portray resolution after the conflict.

Although Brief 4 (Fusions) attracted the least responses it was noted that there were some lovely submissions where candidates had fully exploited the concepts of the waltz and jazz. The most successful compositions fully considered the dance element of the brief. Many wrote for piano with a woodwind accompaniment.

Responses to the Free Composition.

Many students enjoyed the opportunity the new specification offers to explore and create music based on their own learning and experiences. In general, these compositions were extremely successful and teacher assessors should be congratulated for encouraging their students to draw inspiration from a wide range of starting points to develop their ideas. It was concerning, as with the legacy specification, that students from some centres all submitted free compositions based on the same musical genre eg minimalism using very similar instrumental forces. Some briefs created by the students failed to consider the audience and/or occasion for their free composition.

Assessment

Teacher-Assessors.

A pleasing number of teacher assessors made detailed comments on the CAS forms, highlighting the features of their students' compositions which were being credited. This practise is to be encouraged. The assessment process was less successful when teacher assessors merely repeated the assessment criteria or even failed to make any comments to justify the marks they awarded.

Use of Marking Criteria.

As the new specification becomes more embedded, it is anticipated that the teacher assessors' application of the assessment criteria will become more successful. It is clear, from moderator feedback and scrutiny of the CAS forms, that many teacher assessors fully understood the new level based assessment criteria and were able to accurately apply the mark scheme to their student's compositions. Unfortunately, quite a significant number of teacher assessors were lenient and in some cases extremely lenient in the application of the assessment grids.

Assessment Grid 1 (Developing musical ideas);

Teacher assessors tended to consider the first bullet point where ideas were developed but where ideas were merely repeated rather than extended they tended towards leniency. For the Set Brief, students needed to consider all

elements of the task in order to achieve an 'imaginative' (Level 5) response, more commonly the candidates gave a 'creative' (Level 4).

Assessment Grid 2 (Demonstrating technical control):

To access the higher levels when applying this grid, students needed to securely manage the musical elements, exploit all parts idiomatically and consider textural variety.

Assessment Grid 3(Composing with musical coherence).

This was assessment grid generally more accurately judged. The structure and the sense of direction of the music was mostly correct. The most common error was to overlook the contrast in the music eg dynamic, textural or melodic contrast.

Administration

Composition authentication sheet (CAS)

The vast majority were presented as per instruction and with great care. It is noted that sheets printed onto single A4 sheets, scaled up to A3 size, stapled or placed into plastic wallets are difficult to manage.

Most CAS forms were completed in great detail and accuracy but a few centres were contacted for missing information, such as missing scores or recordings and occasionally the lowest or highest candidate was omitted. There were some instances where the candidate's scores were incorrectly totalled or transferred onto the gateway. Generally, timings for compositions were correctly measured.

Scores

Many centres presented excellent scores demonstrating a high level of attention to detail in the music. These scores clearly signified the intentions of the students and this was particularly evident with the responses to the briefs set by Pearson and where score-writing programmes were used.

The presentation of screenshots scores from sequencing packages and lead sheets did not always fully convey the intentions of the music 'so that it may be easily replicated by another performer' - *GCSE (9-1) Music specification document p27*. The higher scoring students presenting these type of scores tended to fully annotate the music in order to provide the moderator as much information as possible to judge their compositions.

Recordings

Approximately two thirds of centres submitted their compositions on CDs as opposed to the third who sent work on a USB stick. In both cases, labelling did not always follow instructions in the Administrative Support Guide (ASG) and this made locating tracks time consuming. The general quality of

recordings was good and enabled teacher assessors and moderators to make accurate assessments. As previously mentioned, some centres provided 'live' recordings of the compositions. This assisted moderators to fully understand the intentions of the students. Some centres submitted work with background noise or poorly balanced parts. In future years, full consideration of the quality of the final mixdown of each compositions would certainly assist the moderation process.

Moving forward centres should:

With regard to future submissions, please refer to the 2019 Administrative Support Guide:

- 1) The CAS form should be photocopied as a booklet with the Free Composition on page 2 followed by the Set Brief Composition on page 3. The scores/commentaries for each candidate should be placed inside. (Please note, A4 folders, poly-pockets, display books are unnecessary.)
- 2) The CD or USB stick should include the compositions in candidate number order (Free Composition followed by the Set Brief Composition)
- 3) A track list should be included with the CD and the track numbers noted on the relevant CAS form (track announcements with centre/candidate numbers are not required)
- 4) Please check that both the candidate and teacher assessor signatures are present on page 1.
- 5) Please ensure that the work of the **highest** and **lowest** candidate is included within the requested sample. If they are not, please add these to the submission.
- 6) Ensure that the time for each composition and the total for the component are accurately recorded on the CAS form. Often lead-in and lead-out times were included in this total which did not accurately reflect the true total of the candidate's portfolio, particularly for those students whose work was very close to the 3 minute minimum requirement.
- 7) Please ensure that the submission arrives prior to the deadline. (This will allow more time to contact the centre if any further materials or clarification are required).
- 8) Please ensure that the EDI printout for the correct component is included with the submission. Numerous centres this year sent the composing moderator the performing work and vice versa thus delaying the moderation of the work.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link: <http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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