



New Zealand Qualifications Authority  
Mana Tohu Matauranga O Aotearoa

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# Assessment Report

## Level 2 Music 2016

Standards [91275](#) [91276](#) [91277](#)

### Part A: Commentary

Candidates who achieved the higher grades showed a sound grasp of musical terminology, a clear and at times perceptive understanding of musical elements and features and their use, as well as the ability to read, write and interpret musical notation accurately.

Candidates who achieved less well often provided generic, descriptive or overly vague responses, had a limited ability to use musical terminology accurately, and were unclear on the definitions of – and differences between – musical elements and features. These candidates tended to lack fluency in both reading and writing musical notation.

Teachers and candidates should refer to the Achievement Standards and the Assessment Specifications, as well as to the Aural Skills and Conventions documents on the [Music subject page](#) in preparation for these examinations.

### Part B: Report on Standards

## 91275: Demonstrate aural understanding through written representation

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- notated some basic details on the score, often without precision
- identified isolated chords only
- identified isolated melodic contours or transcribed individual rhythmic patterns
- identified the basic elements and / or features of the musical extracts
- did not provide supporting definitions, details or explanations.

Candidates who were assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not notate basic details on the score
- identified only a few chords

- did not identify melodic contour or transcribe rhythmic patterns with any accuracy
- lacked familiarity with the terminology of musical elements and / or features.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- notated details on the score with some accuracy and precision
- identified pairs of chords
- transcribed some melodic phrases with some errors in pitch and / or rhythm
- identified elements and / or features of the musical extracts, and supported answers with brief definitions or further information.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- notated details on the score with accuracy and precision using correct terminology
- identified chordal phrases and cadences
- transcribed at least some melodic phrases with accuracy
- supported accurate identification of elements and / or features with correct definitions and coherent, detailed explanations in response to the questions.

### Standard-specific comments

Some candidates struggled with naming cadences, and with sensible chord choices at the cadence points. Some candidates also included chord ii, despite it not being an option. Many missed the raised seventh in the minor melody question.

Some candidates did not understand or know the elements of music, and fewer knew about compositional devices.

Teachers and candidates should note that specific requirements for this examination are provided in the Aural Skills document, published on the [Music subject page](#).

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## 91276: Demonstrate knowledge of conventions in a range of music scores

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- understood basic terms and signs
- recognised some basic musical concepts and performance directions
- identified the quantity of intervals
- attempted the transcription and transposition questions
- identified root position chords using Roman numerals.

Candidates who were assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- used irrelevant language to explain basic musical concepts
- failed to respond all parts of each question
- did not understand the questions.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- identified inverted and minor chords using both Roman numeral and jazz / rock notation
- fully identified intervals
- completed one chord of a perfect cadence accurately
- responded with full answers when explaining texture, terms and symbols and comparisons.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- completed cadences with accurate doubling and voice leading
- transposed and transcribed musical passages with accuracy
- provided pertinent musical evidence to justify responses
- knew the relationship of tab notation to standard notation
- fully understood the meaning of musical elements and compositional devices and were able to apply their understanding to interpreting musical scores.

### Standard-specific comments

Many candidates seemed unaware of the difference between:

- repetition – an exact or almost exact repeat either rhythmically or melodically (or both) of a short passage
- sequence – repetitions of a motif at a higher or lower pitch by the same instrument
- imitation – repetitions of a motif at the same or different pitch by a different instrument.

Candidates need to be aware that the amount of space given for responses gives an indication of the detail expected.

Although spelling mistakes were not penalised, the spelling of basic musical terms was often inaccurate.

The explanatory notes for this Achievement Standard specify “identification and description” for Achievement, “explanation” for Merit, and “application” for Excellence. Candidates who are able to apply their understanding of musical conventions to music scores are those who are able to achieve well in this examination

Teachers and candidates should note that specific requirements for this examination are provided in the Conventions document, published on the Music Resources page of the NZQA website (see link above).

## 91277: Demonstrate knowledge of two substantial contrasting music works

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- made one simple connection in comparing the two pieces
- indicated the structure clearly and simply
- described the use of one musical element accurately.
- confused terminology between musical elements (e.g. “tone” for “tonality”, “texture” for “timbre”)
- described musical evidence simply, or notated musical evidence that was partially accurate or relevant.

Candidates who were assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not make any connection between the two pieces
- made generic comments about the effect of the music on audiences when trying to describe use of musical elements
- showed little understanding of musical elements
- wrote about one piece only or four different pieces
- presented irrelevant, little, or no musical evidence.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- made detailed connections between the two pieces
- showed a detailed understanding of structure
- described the use of two musical elements accurately and in detail
- presented accurate and relevant musical evidence, either in description or notated.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- discussed the comparison of the two works with insight, presenting not only background information but clear and succinct comparisons of musical aspects of the pieces
- had a detailed understanding of structure and perceptively related this to musical elements in the piece
- perceptively discussed not only the use but also the importance of the musical elements in the pieces
- presented accurate and highly relevant musical evidence, described or notated in detail.

### Standard-specific comments

One of the weakest elements in many student responses was their lack of ability to compare and contrast the two pieces in the first section. It should be noted that comparison is an integral part of this standard, and students should be prepared to compare their two chosen works in any area.

Discussing context or purpose should involve examining musical aspects, not just historical dates and / or the emotional state of the composer. Responses that worked well showed an

understanding of the historical era and how they specifically influenced the composer's intent.

Melody was an element that was commonly poorly tackled, with either an over-reliance on descriptions of word-painting or of lyrical meaning. Few candidates showed understanding of motivic development or thematic contrast.

Candidates are advised to be pragmatic in their choice of works – complete symphonies, musicals, masses etc. are simply too big and complex. A movement or a selection of songs should be perfectly adequate.

Few movements / songs were appropriately placed in the context of the whole work, and when in another language the meaning / interpretation was seldom tackled.

Two pieces that are very similar can restrict the ability of a candidate to fully compare and contrast.

Some successful choices of work in 2016 were:

- Farmer – “Fair Phyllis”
- Vivaldi – “Spring”, from *The Four Seasons*
- Bach – “Brandenburg” Concerto No. 5
- Beethoven – Piano Concerto No. 3 (mvt 3), Symphonies Nos. 5 and 7 (single mvts)
- Prokofiev – “Classical” Symphony, “Montagues and Capulets” from *Romeo and Juliet*
- Rodrigo – *Concierto de Aranjuez*
- Faure – Requiem (selected mvts)
- Bartok – Concerto for Orchestra
- Gershwin – *Rhapsody in Blue*
- Schönberg – *Les Misérables* (selected songs)
- Buchanan – “The Ghosts of Denniston”
- Farr – *Volume Pig, From the Depths Sound the Great Sea Gongs*
- Psathas – *Waiting for the Aeroplane, Omniferix, Calenture*, “Dance of the Maenads”
- Lilburn – “Aotearoa” Overture
- Body – “Carol to St Stephen”
- Davis – “All Blues”
- Parker – “Ornithology”
- Weather Report – “Birdland”
- From Scratch – *Pacific 3, 2, 1, 0*
- The Beatles – “All You Need Is Love”, “A Day In The Life”
- Queen – “Bohemian Rhapsody”

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