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Mana Tohu Matauranga O Aotearoa[Home](#) > [NCEA](#) > [Subjects](#) > [Assessment Reports](#) > [Music - L3](#)

Assessment Report

On this page

[91420: Integrate aural skills into written representation](#) ▼[91421: Demonstrate knowledge of harmonic and tonal conventions in a range of music scores](#) ▼[91423: Examine the influence of context on a substantial music work](#) ▼

Level 3 Music 2018

Standards [91420](#) [91421](#) [91423](#)

Part A: Commentary

Level 3 Music candidates who achieved success commonly demonstrated a well-developed understanding of musical elements and features across different musical styles and in a variety of contexts. Appropriate language was used to clearly express their ideas with key terms being used correctly. Answers were legible when music notation was required. Paragraph or essay responses were well structured with candidates providing information relevant to the specific question. Works used for the context essay were substantial enough to allow in-depth understanding to be shown.

Part B: Report on standards

91420: Integrate aural skills into written

representation

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- used appropriate musical language to describe musical and compositional features
- understood and explained basic musical textures
- described the tonality of musical passages accurately
- compared musical passages and outlined some differences and similarities
- transcribed melodic contours and rhythmic patterns with some accuracy
- identified notes within chord patterns
- identified some of the instruments and ensembles heard.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- provided unfocused or imprecise responses
- did not have adequate English language skills to provide coherent, balanced responses
- supplied musical manuscript evidence containing basic notation errors
- lacked knowledge of basic musical terms, elements and features
- misheard contour direction, interval quantity and rhythmic patterns
- labelled chords inaccurately.

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

- explained musical textures, cadences and tonality in detail
- outlined the structure and function of compositional device
- identified where the music modulated
- discussed how musical contrast was being achieved
- matched melodic patterns with rhythmic patterns with some accuracy
- selected chord indications which showed awareness of harmonic progression
- identified instruments and ensembles.

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

- provided detailed analysis of musical features and elements
- compared and contrasted musical changes and similarities in a range of contexts
- explained specific compositional devices in detail
- identified modulation and showed understanding of tonal relationships
- completed highly accurate melodic and rhythmic transcriptions
- outlined harmonic content using primary and secondary chords in root position and inversion with attention to added sevenths and suspended notes.

Standard specific comments

Candidates need to develop their aural skills by listening to and thinking reflectively on a wide range of music. They are encouraged to provide as detailed a response as they can.

For example, in Question One (c) candidates were required to discuss tonality and modulation. The following responses outline the differences in what was required to achieve at each level.

- The music is in the tonic key (Not Achieved).
- The music modulates to a related key (Achievement).
- The music modulates to a minor key then a major key (Merit).
- The music modulates to the relative minor, the dominant major then back to the tonic (Excellence).

In narrative style questions, it is important that candidates take time to craft their responses using the guidelines in the questions. While some candidates provided good detail, they did not always focus their responses in a coherent or structured manner.

91421: Demonstrate knowledge of harmonic and tonal conventions in a range

of music scores

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- identified chords in root and inverted positions using a range of standard notation terminology
- labelled simple chords using Roman numeral notation
- used given harmonic progressions to write accurate bass lines
- completed basic cadential progressions by writing missing inner harmonic parts
- differentiated between major, minor and diminished chords
- demonstrated understanding of harmonic contour and voice leading.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- struggled to identify the tonality of a given extract and its relationship to the tonic key
- selected inappropriate triads and chord patterns
- used inaccurate terminology to describe harmonic features
- wrote stylistically weak passages containing basic harmonic and rhythmic errors
- overlooked simple modulations
- analysed cadence points inaccurately.

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

- differentiated between harmonic and non-harmonic notes and analysed them in detail
- completed harmonic passages based on given bass lines
- harmonised musical cadence points based on a given melody
- demonstrated understanding of harmonic accuracy through completing inner voice parts
- labelled and analysed pivot chords used in modulating passages
- demonstrated knowledge of vocal range and harmonic texture.

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

- demonstrated a secure understanding of chord progressions, cadential writing and modulation
- demonstrated stylistic flair and musical accuracy when completing harmonic extracts
- were aware of limitations within vocal ranges
- maintained given harmonic textures and compositional styles
- used a range of harmonic resources including seventh chords, inversions and non-harmonic notes
- considered rhythmic content, musical contour and phrasing when adding moving bass lines.

Standard specific comments

Candidates who have a stronger grasp of musical language, cadences, standard harmonic progressions and voice ranges are in a better position to achieve in this standard.

Where candidates were able to process harmonic content, they set themselves up well for Achievement at Merit or Excellence level. Those who struggled to achieve were not as secure in understanding musical elements and applying them to the task.

Notational skills are also important. Ambiguous note heads, faulty tail direction and inaccurate rhythmic content often marred what would otherwise have been a secure response.

91423: Examine the influence of context on a substantial music work

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- provided responses that were pre-prepared and had some relationship to the question being answered
- wrote generalised statements about the contexts and their influence on the work

- presented responses that were musically analytical but did not make use of the analysis to support a response to the influence of context
- wrote factual information that was not developed in any depth
- supported responses with simple musical evidence.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- wrote about works that were not substantial
- presented pre-prepared responses that did not respond to the question
- Provided in-depth analyses of song lyrics or plots unsupported by musical or contextual evidence
- had limited ability to use musical terminology
- used very broad evidence that did not specifically support their response
- provided detailed biographical or contextual information that was unsupported by any musical information.

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

- provided clear and detailed explanations of the influence of context on the conception, production, and interpretation of the work
- provided specific musical evidence that supported key points, presented descriptively or as musical quotations on the manuscript provided
- planned their essay to ensure that it responded specifically to the question
- used accurate and purposeful musical terminology throughout their response.

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

- showed an in-depth understanding of both the question and the influence of context on the work
- were able to make insightful links to wider contextual understanding
- defined clearly the parameters of their responses and provided in-depth, clear, and insightful discussion supported by relevant and perceptive musical evidence.

Standard specific comments

Candidates were generally well prepared for this standard, but should be advised that pre-prepared responses often hinder the capacity to respond specifically to

the question, particularly when responses are pre-structured with a paragraph on each of conception, production and interpretation.

Candidates should also be aware that this standard does not require a lengthy analysis of a music work, rather that carefully selected and relevant musical evidence is used to support key points being made. Those who exceeded the suggested word limit generally did not improve their grade but provided more of the same quality of evidence. Candidates are to be encouraged to write succinct responses.

Some candidates were unable to provide in-depth responses as their works were not substantial. This was particularly apparent for short, stand-alone songs.

Candidates who have studied vocal works and musicals should be careful to ensure that lyric analyses and/or plot summaries are used to support the response to the question rather than be the main body of the response. It is important to demonstrate knowledge of the influence on the context on the music as well as the thematic content of the plot/lyrics.

Examples of “substantial” music works that worked well in 2018 were:

- Concerto for Orchestra (Bartók)
- *The Horizon from Owhiro Bay* (Farr)
- Symphony No. 5 (Shostakovich)
- *The Rite of Spring* (Stravinsky)
- *Romeo and Juliet* (Tchaikovsky)
- *Pictures at an Exhibition* (Mussorgsky)

[Music subject page](#)

Previous years' reports

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[2016 \(PDF, 243KB\)](#)