

National Certificate of Educational Achievement

2012 Assessment Report

Music Level 2

- 91275 Demonstrate aural understanding through written representation**
- 91276 Demonstrate knowledge of conventions in a range of music scores**
- 91277 Demonstrate understanding of two substantial contrasting music works**

COMMENTARY

All external music standards require candidates to identify and explain musical elements and features and to relate these to specific music works or extracts. Candidates frequently confused elements, e.g. timbre, texture, tonality and metre. Many candidates also wrote statements generically describing elements and features without relating each to a specific extract or work.

91275 Demonstrate aural understanding through written representation

ACHIEVEMENT

Candidates who were awarded Achievement for this standard demonstrated the required skills and knowledge. They typically:

- identified isolated chords
- ensured that some chords chosen agreed with the given melody
- transcribed accurate contours in either treble or bass clef
- identified features and instruments evidencing jazz style
- understood the meaning of metre, tempo and tonality.

NOT ACHIEVED

Candidates who were assessed as Not Achieved for this standard lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement. They typically:

- identified few chords and sometimes identified chords that were outside the standard
- did not understand that sus 4 chords resolve to the same chord, not the other way round
- wrote contours (lines) instead of notes when transcribing
- gave generalised descriptions of style that were not specific to jazz
- did not understand the meaning of musical elements and features, particularly metre, tonality instrumentation and articulation.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Merit typically:

- understood the use of a sus chord, at least in the final cadence
- identified at least two cadences and chords that matched one cadence identified
- were able to notate patterns (pitch and rhythm) a little beyond where rhythms were given
- understood elements but often used confusing language when describing the features of the extracts.
- were able to identify the instrumentation and tonality of an extract.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH EXCELLENCE

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement with Merit, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Excellence typically:

- consistently ensured that chords chosen agreed with the given melody

- distinguished between chords V and V7
- transcribed pitch and rhythm accurately in both treble and bass clefs with minimal error
- used appropriate language that related to specific extracts when explaining musical elements and features.

OTHER COMMENTS

Strengths:

Many candidates used the given material as a guide when identifying chords and transcribing melodies. Many also transcribed with rhythmic accuracy beyond given rhythms. Melodic transcription for passages with stepwise movement was generally well done.

Weaknesses:

Some candidates demonstrated a lack of knowledge regarding chord functions, e.g. sus4 chords, or a wider range of knowledge of elements and features other than texture and dynamics. Some candidates found relating elements and features to specific excerpts problematic, particularly in question 3.

91276 Demonstrate knowledge of conventions in a range of music scores

ACHIEVEMENT

Candidates who were awarded Achievement for this standard demonstrated the required skills and knowledge. They typically:

- identified and accurately used common Italian terms
- identified the quantity of intervals
- identified the key of at least one passage of music
- inserted the bass and chord indications for a perfect cadence with accurate note values
- identified string techniques.

NOT ACHIEVED

Candidates who were assessed as Not Achieved for this standard lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement. They typically:

- read questions inaccurately eg chose elements / features not in the extract or outside the bar numbers required
- were unfamiliar with basic Italian terms
- miscalculated the quantity of intervals
- were unable to identify the key of a passage, particularly passages in minor keys
- were unable to accurately identify chords using either jazz/rock or Roman numeral notation.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Merit typically:

- read all instructions carefully

- identified both the quantity and quality of intervals
- were familiar with Italian terms for tempo, changes of tempo, and articulation
- gave appropriate evidence, e.g. raised leading note, when identifying tonality
- were aware of instruments that were transposing including the double bass.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH EXCELLENCE

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement with Merit, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Excellence typically:

- transposed accurately both from written pitch to sounding pitch and vice versa
- explained word painting with precise evidence
- gave accurate evidence when explaining terms for following a score
- understood conventions for instrument doubling.

OTHER COMMENTS

Strengths:

Many candidates were able to identify score instructions (e.g. CODA). Some candidates did not read the instructions carefully, choosing to explain the terms rather than listing instructions as requested. A greater majority of candidates demonstrated word painting with precise evidence.

Weaknesses:

Many candidates were unable to write chord indications and bass notes for a perfect cadence. Very few were able to accurately transpose for alto saxophone from written to concert pitch. Candidates also struggled in the final question to accurately transcribe from transposed pitch to concert pitch. Identifying chords in any notation proved problematic, and very few accurately identified the root of chord that bore any resemblance to the chord they had attempted to identify.

91277 Demonstrate understanding of two substantial contrasting music works

ACHIEVEMENT

Candidates who were awarded Achievement for this standard demonstrated the required skills and knowledge. They typically:

- gave simple evidence to support statements
- demonstrated understanding in two of the three required aspects of the criteria (context, musical elements and features, and reference to a music score)
- made general statements in regards to compositional devices and performance techniques.

NOT ACHIEVED

Candidates who were assessed as Not Achieved for this standard lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement. They typically:

- made statements that did not address specific questions
- misunderstood key terms, e.g. homophonic and figured-bass, in their responses
- failed to support responses with evidence

- chose music works that did not offer the opportunity to examine contrast.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Merit typically:

- supported responses with specific musical evidence
- used the provided staves to supply quotations from music scores
- used technical musical language accurately
- demonstrated depth of understanding in two of the three required aspects of the criteria (context, musical elements and features, and reference to a music score).

ACHIEVEMENT WITH EXCELLENCE

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement with Merit, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Excellence typically:

- supported responses with a wide range of musical evidence, including a variety of score quotations
- demonstrated perceptive understanding in all three required aspects of the criteria (context, musical elements and features, and reference to a music score).

OTHER COMMENTS

Choice of works:

Candidates generally used a range of works that enabled them to make clear and easy reference to a wide range of both musical and contextual features.

In cases where candidates used a large-scale work such as an opera, musical, or major orchestral work, those who used smaller excerpts, such as an aria, song or movement, to answer various questions, were able to write more specifically, and with more clarity than those who tried to refer to the work as a whole.

The standard calls for substantial music works. Some works chosen by candidates had insufficient substance to allow them to demonstrate understanding of musical or contextual features at this level, e.g. *La Bamba* – Richie Valens and *Call Me Maybe* – Carly Rae Jepsen.

The standard also calls for contrasting music works. There were examples of candidates using works that, although rich in musical and contextual features, and by different composers or performers, were of such similar genre or era, that candidates were unable to draw clear distinctions between the works. Examples include works by The Bats and Nirvana, musicals *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Chess*, and songs *April Sun In Cuba* and *Bohemian Rhapsody*.

Other:

Musical quotes need clefs and key signatures to be clear.

Candidates should be able to identify both the title and composer of a musical work. Examples were evident where candidates referred to author of the source material, rather than the composer of a music work, e.g. Tolkien for “The Lord of the Rings” movie score instead of Howard Shore.

When evaluating the modern ability to produce ‘authentic’ performances, many candidates limited themselves to discussing ‘surface’ aspects such as instruments, venue and audience. Candidates should consider this in terms of ‘respect for the material’. Although period instruments may not be possible, what performance techniques might enable a performer to emulate that sound.