

National Certificate of Educational Achievement

2013 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

Candidates sitting these papers need to have knowledge of musical elements and knowledge of the features and structural devices that link to each element. Candidates should show focused listening and/or score analysis skills, in order to provide musical evidence in their responses.

STANDARD REPORTS

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 (a limited number of) tonic, minor and suspended chords
- were able to notate contour where the rhythm was given
- attempted to notate passages where the rhythm was not given
- recognised some instruments being played
- wrote acceptable responses, albeit lacking the detail required for merit/excellence
- recognised some elements although failed to link these to features heard.

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:

- used chords that had not been given at the top of the page within the instructions
- failed to complete all the chords within the extract
- deviated from the given rhythm given when notating the melody
- did not attempt all of the melodic transcription
- demonstrated little knowledge of musical elements and features
- failed to identify commonly used instruments (e.g. orchestral woodwind, brass and untuned percussion).

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

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

- resolved suspended chords accurately (i.e. Vsus4–V; Isus4–I)
- demonstrated understanding of basic harmonic progressions
- attempted to use chords that appropriately harmonised the given melody
- demonstrated understanding of 6/8 rhythms
- notated some patterns (rhythm and pitch) accurately in both treble and bass clef
- gave some detailed responses when describing features and techniques
- used appropriate musical terms when describing elements/features/instrumental techniques
- attempted all parts of each question.

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:

- successfully identified dominant 7th chords
- accurately identified cadences and matched them with their identified chords
- remembered to raise the leading note when transcribing in minor tonality
- showed understanding of the significance of the tied note (Q2b) and used this to inform their responses
- differentiated between a musical feature and an instrumental technique
- provided appropriate detail and musical evidence in their responses.

OTHER COMMENTS

Not all candidates had strengths in each and every question, those candidates who attempted all questions gave themselves more opportunity to achieve well. Candidates are strongly encouraged to attempt all parts of all questions.

Candidates who used strategies for matching chords to a given melody were considerably advantaged. Those without knowledge of the chords that constitute cadences were disadvantaged.

Many candidates did not understand the significance of the tied (non-sounding) note in part (b) and did not therefore take advantage of the repeated pattern throughout the extract. A number of weaker candidates worked on rhythm without notating any pitch. This precluded any opportunity for them to gaining any credit for contour.

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 common terms and instruments correctly
- showed a basic understanding of texture and metre
- were able to identify the quantity of intervals
- had some understanding of drum kit notation
- were able to insert chord indications and bass notes for a perfect cadence.

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:

- did not recognise keys or clefs other than treble
- appeared to have no knowledge of musical form
- appeared not to have transcription skills
- were unable to identify the quantity of intervals

- did not recognise that when transposing, for every accidental in the original key, an accidental is also needed in the transposed passage
- demonstrated little knowledge of elements, or failed to link these to compositional devices.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

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

- were able to fully describe metre
- were able to identify keys and provide evidence for their identification
- transcribed from open to short score with general accuracy
- described accurately both the quality and the quantity of intervals
- were familiar with different genres (e.g. classical/romantic and jazz).

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:

- provided valid musical evidence for their identification of form
- demonstrated full understanding of key relationships
- transcribed for piano accurately and precisely
- described compound intervals
- were able to write a perfect cadence accurately
- understood elements and were able to link compositional devices to particular elements
- transposed accurately for a particular instrument.

OTHER COMMENTS

Candidate strengths this year included transcription for piano, describing intervals and transposition (though not always accurately for a particular instrument). Weaknesses included a lack of knowledge of form – the names of common forms (e.g. binary and ternary) and awareness of the connection between form and tonality. Although many candidates were able to identify elements, they were too often unable to link these to particular compositional devices (e.g. link syncopation to rhythm). Many candidates also failed to recognise the difference between an instrumental technique (e.g. bowing) and a compositional device (e.g. repetition).

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 basic understanding of their studied music works
- made general statements about what occurred in the works.

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
- failed to support responses with evidence
- neglected to answer all sections of each question
- selected music works which 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 musical quotations from scores
- used technical musical language accurately
- demonstrated depth of understanding across both works
- matched musical works to suitable questions.

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 across both music works
- wrote insightful responses to questions, using evaluation and judgement.

OTHER COMMENTS

Exam technique is very important in this standard. Candidates are best advised to read through the paper before beginning, paying close attention to instructions (particularly those that require using a work with a score, or not covering previous material). By doing this, candidates can match their music works with the best questions for them. This is particularly relevant for those who study predominantly rhythmic percussion-based works, as questions about melody or tonality become awkward.

This standard calls for two substantial contrasting music works. There were many examples of candidates using works from such similar styles or genres, that it was difficult for them to make clear distinctions between differences in the works. This is particularly evident where candidates use two works from the same composer or era, or alternatively close genres with only very specific points of difference, such as deathcore and metalcore.

Pop songs are hard to categorise as 'substantial' as per the requirements of the standard, and many students countered this through studying an album as a single music work.

Where candidates used works from Musical Theatre (particularly *Les Misérables*), there was a tendency to focus on story and lyrical elements, but pay little attention to other musical elements.