

National Certificate of Educational Achievement

2013 Assessment Report

Music Level 3

- 91420 Integrate aural skills into written representation**
- 91421 Demonstrate understanding of harmonic and tonal conventions in a range of music scores**
- 91422 Analyse a substantial music work**

COMMENTARY

Candidates need to have a very secure knowledge of musical elements, and the features and structural devices that link to each element, to apply them either by focused listening or by precise score analysis to provide musical evidence in their responses. To achieve with merit and excellence, the evidence needs to be accurate, precise and detailed.

STANDARD REPORTS

91420 Integrate aural skills into written representation

ACHIEVEMENT

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

- used appropriate musical language to describe simple musical features
- showed understanding of musical tempo, timbre, articulation and texture
- explained common instrumental techniques
- compared musical passages and outlined basic differences and similarities
- identified musical contours and rhythmic patterns.

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 inappropriate language to describe musical elements and features
- confused the meaning of tonality and pitch, tempo and articulation, imitation and sequence
- appeared to struggle to identify instrumental timbres and techniques
- misheard contour direction, interval width and rhythmic patterns
- labelled chords inaccurately.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

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

- explained musical textures, cadences and tonality in detail
- outlined the structure and function of compositional devices
- represented melodic and rhythmic patterns
- showed awareness of major and minor chords in a harmonic context
- discussed tonal quality and instrumental features with accuracy.

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 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

- completed highly accurate melodic and rhythmic patterns
- outlined harmonic content using primary and secondary chords in root position and inversion.

OTHER COMMENTS

A number of capable students demonstrated musical knowledge and understanding but did not achieve their maximum potential because they provided conflicting information or they omitted important detail. For example, students often correctly identified in question 3 (d) (ii) that the violin was playing a counter-melody to the vocal line, but failed to mention that the answering motif was an ascending scale passage.

91421 Demonstrate understanding of harmonic and tonal 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 chords in root and inverted positions using a range of standard notation terminology
- explained the relationship of closely related keys
- labelled simple cadences and explained them using roman numeral notation
- completed basic cadential progressions by writing missing inner harmonic parts
- demonstrated understanding of harmonic contour and voice leading.

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:

- struggled to identify the tonality of a given extract and its relationship to the tonic key
- used inappropriate terminology to describe chords and cadences
- wrote stylistically weak passages containing basic harmonic and rhythmic errors
- overlooked simple modulations and determined cadence points inaccurately
- used thick and over-sonorous harmonic textures often set in a low register.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

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

- differentiated between harmonic and non-essential 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.

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:

- demonstrated stylistic flair and musical accuracy when completing harmonic extracts
- maintained given harmonic textures
- used a range of harmonic resources including seventh chords and inversions
- ensured required pedal notes were used in the correct context
- considered musical contour and phrasing when adding moving bass lines
- transposed pitches and key signature up a perfect 5th in a highly accurate and detailed manner, taking care with performance directions (dynamic, slurs) and stem directions.

OTHER COMMENTS

Capable students demonstrated secure musical knowledge and understanding and achieved their maximum potential because they read the questions and followed all written instructions.

91422 Analyse a substantial music work

ACHIEVEMENT

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

- provided basic information about the work
- wrote accurate definitions of the element(s)/feature(s)/device(s) in questions but did not offer specific musical evidence relating to the work studied
- studied a work that had limited scope or was not substantial enough allow the detailed evidence required to gain Merit or Excellence.

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:

- wrote the title of the work only and did not attempt to answer the questions
- answered questions briefly and with insufficient depth to gain Achievement
- provided irrelevant information or wrote statements that did not make sense
- confused music terminology e.g. imitation, sequence, repetition, instrumentation.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

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

- demonstrated consistent understanding of musical elements, features and structural devices
- gave relevant evidence on tonality that related to the work studied
- provided information that was not repeated in other sections of the paper
- provided specific musical evidence to highlight the points made in their responses.

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:

- included detailed and comprehensive musical evidence throughout the paper i.e. music notation or diagrams
- provided perceptive and insightful answers that reflected a comprehensive understanding of the and highlighted specific connections with the written text
- included more than one example of musical evidence to highlight their understanding of the work
- showed a comprehensive understanding of both the structure and the expressive qualities of the work
- included, where appropriate, insightful and perceptive responses about socio-historical aspects that informed the context and structure of the work.

OTHER COMMENTS

Candidates need to provide specific musical evidence from the work studied, by way of specific music notation, accurate bar numbers or detailed diagrams to support their responses. If candidates choose to study genres that do not have conventional musical scores e.g. hip hop, pop, rock, metal or world music, or are of insufficient substance for candidates to provide detailed musical evidence over a range of questions, a single song may not suffice, and it may be wise to focus on an entire album. Conversely it would be sufficient to study a representative section of a very substantial work, e.g. a single movement of a symphony or concerto or a selection of recitatives, arias and choruses from an opera or oratorio.