

Part A: Commentary

Level 3 Music candidates who demonstrated a secure understanding of musical elements and features were in a stronger position to achieve success in the Level 3 external examinations than those who did not. Those candidates whose responses demonstrated an understanding of musical language and literacy appropriate to the requirements of the Level 3 standards were most likely to succeed.

Part B: Report on standards

1. Assessment Report for 91420: Integrate aural skills into written representation

Achieved	<p>Candidates who were assessed as Achieved commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempted a range of questions and question parts across the paper used appropriate musical language to describe musical features understood and explained basic musical textures compared musical passages and outlined some differences and similarities transcribed melodic contours and rhythms accurately identified some of the instruments and ensembles heard.
Not Achieved	<p>Candidates who were assessed as Not Achieved commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> gave imprecise or unfocused answers lacked knowledge of basic musical terms, elements and features struggled to identify basic instrumental timbres, ensembles and instrumental techniques confused the meaning of rhythm, metre and tempo misheard contour direction, interval width and rhythmic patterns labelled chords inaccurately.
Achieved with Merit	<p>Candidates who were assessed as Achieved with Merit commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> explained musical textures, cadences and tonality in detail outlined the structure and function of compositional devices discussed how musical contrast was being achieved matched melodic pitch with rhythmic patterns with some accuracy selected chord indications which showed awareness of harmonic progression identified most instruments and ensembles correctly.
Achieved with Excellence	<p>Candidates who were assessed as Achieved with Excellence commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.
Standard specific comments	<p>Candidates need to develop their aural skills by listening to and thinking reflectively on a wide range of music.</p> <p>Candidates should also be encouraged to provide as detailed a response as they can. For example, a question such as “How does the tonality of bars 9-16 relate to bars 1-8?” Compare the following four responses:</p> <p>“It gets louder and thicker.” – (Not Achieved). The response has focused on musical elements other than tonality.</p> <p>“It changes to a new key.” – (Achieved). There is an awareness that modulation</p>

	<p>has occurred but gives no additional context.</p> <p>“It changes from the tonic key to the dominant key.” – (Merit). This shows greater understanding of the relationship of the second key to the first.</p> <p>“It has moved from the tonic key of C minor to the dominant key, G minor.” (Excellence). This would be the minimum detail required although additional evidence such as “There is a perfect V-I cadence in G minor” would secure the grade more.</p>
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2. Assessment Report for 91421: Demonstrate understanding of harmonic and tonal conventions in a range of music scores

Achieved	<p>Candidates who were assessed as Achieved commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<p>Candidates who were assessed as Not Achieved commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
Achieved with Merit	<p>Candidates who were assessed as Achieved with Merit commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
Achieved with Excellence	<p>Candidates who were assessed as Achieved with Excellence commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrated a secure understanding of basic chord progressions and cadential writing • demonstrated stylistic flair and musical accuracy when completing harmonic extracts • used a range of harmonic resources including seventh chords and inversions • considered musical contour and phrasing when adding moving bass lines • showed awareness of harmonic and non-harmonic tones and continued writing harmonic passages within the context of a given passage.
Standard specific comments	<p>Candidates who have a stronger grasp of musical language and literacy are in a better position to achieve in this standard.</p> <p>Where candidates were able to process harmonic content using both Roman numeral and Jazz, Rock or Figured Bass notation, they set themselves up well for Achievement at Merit or Excellence.</p> <p>Those who struggled to achieve were not as secure in understanding musical elements and applying them to the task required.</p> <p>In recent years the decision to add a second general analysis question has proved beneficial.</p> <p>Teachers are reminded that from 2016 the Figured Bass question will be removed from the paper.</p>

3. Assessment Report for 91422: Analyse a substantial music work

Achieved	<p>Candidates who were assessed as Achieved commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provided only basic or generic information about the work • wrote accurate definitions of the element(s) / feature(s) / device(s) in questions but only offered minimal specific musical evidence relating to the work studied • lacked detailed and accurate understanding of musical terminology • omitted answers to one or two sections of the paper • sometimes repeated material in another section of the paper.
Not Achieved	<p>Candidates who were assessed as Not Achieved commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 eg tonality for tone, texture for dynamics, tonality for timbre etc, sometimes giving sufficient answers but in the wrong place • repeated the same material in several sections of the paper • wrote answers that were clearly rote learned, but bore no relevance to the question.
Achieved with Merit	<p>Candidates who were assessed as Achieved with Merit commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrated a sound and consistent understanding of musical terminology • gave answers that demonstrated a sound understanding of both the genre/style and the specific work • gave relevant and specific evidence that related to the work studied • provided information that was not repeated in other sections of the paper • provided specific musical examples to highlight the points made in their responses. • wrote answers of a consistent standard across the different parts of the paper.
Achieved with Excellence	<p>Candidates who were assessed as Achieved with Excellence commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • included detailed and comprehensive musical evidence throughout the paper, ie music notation or diagrams or detailed written descriptions; including different evidence for the various parts of questions on the same topic • provided perceptive and insightful answers that reflected a comprehensive and detailed understanding of the work • were able to build on earlier evidence rather than repeat evidence in different parts of the question • demonstrated an accurate and in-depth understanding of musical terminology, and were able to apply this to their work • showed a comprehensive understanding of both the musical elements and the expressive qualities of the work • included, where appropriate, insightful responses about socio-historical aspects, including reference to similar works, that informed the context and structure of the work.
Standard specific comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates need to provide specific musical evidence from the work studied, by way of specific music notation, accurate bar numbers, detailed diagrams or written description to support their responses. Some candidates provided all of these. Some provided very little or none at all • candidates need to have an accurate knowledge of musical terminology. Some students are still confused between such terms as timbre, texture, tonality, develop, element etc • candidates need not waste time and space going into detailed explanations of the meaning of a certain element, or restating the question. This is unnecessary as it will be clear in the answer if the candidate understands • many candidates gave an accurate and detailed description/analysis of the structure of the work but were unable to continue this level of response in the rest of the paper • repetition of material was an issue. The nature of some of the questions meant that there often had to be some cross-over, however the candidates who

	<p>achieved well expanded and built upon their earlier answers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• if candidates choose to study genres that do not have conventional musical scores they need to have enough understanding of both the elements and features of the work and musical terminology to answer questions in sufficient detail. <p>The term substantial work was interpreted more carefully by teachers and candidates this year. The vast majority of works chosen were sufficiently substantial.</p> <p>It is to be noted that in 2016 this standard will be assessed internally.</p>
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