

# Assessment Report

---

## On this page

[Level 2 Music 2021](#) ▾

## Level 2 Music 2021

---

Standards [91275](#) [91276](#) [91277](#)

### Part A: Commentary

Candidates who set out their answers systematically and clearly provided stronger responses. Candidates who did not structure their responses clearly often neglected to give sufficient detail, particularly in the 'similarities / differences' and 'typical / atypical' style questions. Candidates who achieved at higher levels included relevant examples when answering questions, working in subject and question-specific vocabulary, and used a palette of terms to identify and describe elements. This was a contrast to some lengthy achieved-level responses which listed a number of features but had minimal relevance to the question posed. Transcription questions were poorly completed in general.

In 91277, choice of works was critical to candidate success. Works without a score made it difficult for candidates to be specific with their evidence. The best responses were when the candidate was able to unpack their knowledge relative to the question rather than trying to include all their learning in the paper.

Candidates should read questions carefully and attempt every part of the assessment. Candidates should also read and be familiar with the Convention



and Aural documents that can be found on the NZQA [Music Subject Page](#). There was evidence of great teaching and learning in these examinations.

## Part B: Report on standards

### 91275: Demonstrate aural understanding through written representation

#### Examinations

The examination consisted of three questions of which candidates were required to respond to all three.

Question 1 was in two parts and required general perception and chord recognition.

Question 2 was in three parts and required the candidates to apply their understanding of the use of various musical elements.

Question 3 was in three parts and required transcription, chord recognition and an understanding of elements and features of particular musical genres. The questions covered the requirements of the 2021 Assessment Specifications which were:

- identification of chord progressions and cadences
- transcription of melodic lines from the upper or lower parts of a texture
- understanding of the use of elements and features, such as instrumentation and timbre; terms, signs, and performance markings; melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic features; and textural, structural, and compositional devices.

#### Observations

Questions requiring discussion-based answers benefitted from using scaffolding first. If asked to compare pieces of music, clearly addressing both similarities and differences or typical and atypical aspects is expected. Candidates who achieved at higher levels included relevant examples from the text and listening extracts when answering questions, bringing subject and question-specific vocabulary into their response. Candidates who achieved at higher levels used a palette of terms to identify and describe each element. This helped in making comparisons between pieces of music, and in describing the musical effects of the element on

the mood or context of the music. When describing timbre, candidates' knowledge of and, preferably experience of, different groups of instruments was helpful.

## Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- identified some chords, the shape or rhythmic pattern of a melody
- identified some instruments, tempi and tempi changes, dynamic changes, two different textures and timbres
- identified elements of style of pop music
- answered discuss and compare questions with two or three attributes
- made a reasonable attempt at annotating features on a score but missed key features
- did not link discussions of features to the wider context of the question
- made significant errors in transcription and chord recognition
- provided chords in indicated boxes not from specified cadence.

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

- confused elements of music
- did not identify musical instruments, articulation, tempi or dynamics
- did not understand what typical and atypical mean
- misunderstood the question
- confused cadences with intervals
- did not use subject and question-specific vocabulary when answering discuss and compare questions
- did not attempt transcription opportunities
- wrote long-answer responses without addressing the question
- used limited evidence from musical extracts or provided texts.

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

- described elements of music with detail and understanding, making 3-4 points

- identified and described three or more different textures or timbre changes in a piece
- identified and notated articulation marks, bar lines and dynamic changes
- wrote notes while listening to form a basis for their discussion
- correctly identified Baroque, (modern) orchestral and pop/rock instruments
- used question-specific vocabulary when answering discuss and compare questions
- showed some evidence of linking discussion responses to provided text as well as the listening extract
- completed at least one transcription question to a high standard
- provided correct cadences, but otherwise made some errors in chord recognition..

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

- applied their detailed knowledge of instruments, elements of music and musical styles to pieces of music
- kept chronological notes of what was changing in terms of tempo, texture, harmony or timbre, in order to match their explanation with the music sequentially
- showed evidence of planning responses while listening, either through note-taking or their own comparison tables drawn in space provided
- showed high levels of competency in rhythmic, melodic and / or harmonic notation
- provided cadences and chords which matched
- used subject-specific, question-appropriate vocabulary when answering discuss and compare questions.

---

91276: Demonstrate knowledge of conventions in a range of music scores

---

## Examinations

The examination consisted of three questions of which candidates were required to respond to all three.

Question 1 was in four parts and required candidates to apply their understanding of intervals, transcription, musical elements and compositional devices.

Question 2 was in four parts and required candidates to apply their understanding of transcription, transposition, articulation and compositional devices.

Question 3 was in four parts and required candidates to apply their understanding of keys, chords, cadences and open-closed scoring.

The questions covered the requirements of the 2021 Assessment Specifications which were to refer to music score extracts and respond to questions using appropriate musical notation and written evidence. Genres specified for 2021 were Accompanied Choral, Jazz Band and String Quartet.

## Observations

Candidates should read questions very carefully and also attempt every part of the examination paper that they can. Very few candidates confused jazz / rock and Roman numeral notation which was pleasing. Candidates should ensure that they practise transcribing musical notation so that they are fully confident with this and be familiar with the Conventions document available on the NZQA Music subject specific pages.

## Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- identified compositional devices and were able to write out a melody from a motif using these
- correctly identified triadic chords without inversions or 7th notes
- showed understanding of the concept of bass TAB notation
- identified the basics of musical elements and compositional devices
- showed understanding of the alto / viola clef
- correctly identified the quantity of intervals without the correct quality
- did not identify / understand vocal tenor clef

- showed difficulty with the concepts of transposition.

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

- applied knowledge expected at Level 1, but fell short of the specifics required for Level 2
- showed some basic knowledge of notation, key signatures and types of music
- identified some musical elements but unable to relate this to the material in the examination
- demonstrated little knowledge of viola/alto clef, articulations, intervals, harmonic processes and musical terminology
- showed evidence of struggling with questions involving transcription of musical notation.

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

- provided evidence around the concepts of transposition and applied these but with some errors
- provided evidence of understanding articulation and notation
- correctly identified triadic chords but missed some inversions or 7th notes
- described musical elements
- recognised and applied knowledge of vocal tenor clef
- showed good recognition of intervals
- confidently and accurately interpreted TAB notation
- demonstrated some attention to detail.

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

- confidently carried out all transposition tasks
- showed comprehensive knowledge of musical elements and were able to analyse the use of these
- showed comprehensive knowledge of compositional devices and their application
- showed comprehensive knowledge of varied notations and styles of music

- showed a strong understanding of harmonic processes including inverted chords, 7th notes, cadences, modulations
  - demonstrated consistent attention to detail.
- 

## 91277: Demonstrate knowledge of two substantial contrasting music works

### Examinations

The examination consisted of one question in two parts. Candidates were required to respond to both parts. Part (a) required candidates to apply their understanding by making a comparison of the purpose or function of the two works studied. Part (b) required candidates to apply their understanding by comparing the use of a significant musical element or feature in the two works studied.

The questions covered the requirements of the 2021 Assessment Specifications which were to provide extended written responses, supported by specific musical evidence, to questions referring to two music works they have studied.

### Observations

The choice of works is critical to candidate success. Works without a score make it difficult for candidates to be specific with their evidence. The best answers for this paper require the candidate to take an angle on how to unpack their answer rather than trying to include all their learning in the paper. While in Question 2 the Sound production technologies and notation/transmission options are available to candidates, few took up this opportunity. This is a shame because works without scores often have included ground-breaking technologies that could be investigated thoroughly. Instead, candidates are writing about elements and features without specific notated evidence or specific language to support their answers. There was evidence of great teaching and processing of works by candidates. Many candidates obviously enjoyed the works studied and had gleaned a breadth of understanding from this process.

### Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

---

- made a simple or implied comparison between the works studied
- wrote a simple description of the purpose or function of the work and or the chosen feature
- used simple or unspecific evidence
- described works (either one or both) that did not have a written score which made the selection of evidence vague
- used unspecified musical language where genre-specific or technical language would have improved candidate results
- included too much description without focus or depth.

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

- did not complete the paper
- had inconsistent answers to both parts of the paper
- did not provide evidence for their argument
- had significant inaccuracies in their answers.

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

- deliberately compared the two works regarding the use of musical features and / or the purpose or function of the works
- included detail in their answers including evidence with either musical quotes, bar numbers or specific structural identification, for example; 2nd verse, 3rd stanza
- used appropriate, genre-specific musical language to describe their work.

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

- demonstrated clear knowledge of their works
- made clear and direct comparisons between the two works and often mentioned other works, particularly in the purpose and function question
- used well-chosen and specific evidence to support their answers, in most cases including all performance marking (if appropriate)
- perceptively compared works and in particular the purpose or function of the work

- wrote concisely.

## [Music subject page](#)

### Previous years' reports

[2020 \(PDF, 260KB\)](#)

[2019 \(PDF, 267KB\)](#)

[2018 \(PDF, 131KB\)](#)

[2017 \(PDF, 57KB\)](#)

[2016 \(PDF, 248KB\)](#)