

MUSIC

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-15	16-32	33-47	48-58	59-70	71-81	82-100

Standard level group performing

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-14	15-30	31-51	52-62	63-69	70-80	81-100

Standard level solo performing

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-14	15-30	31-48	49-59	60-71	72-82	83-100

Standard level creating

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-15	16-31	32-47	48-58	59-70	71-81	82-100

Solo performing (HL/SLS)

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-3	4-7	8-11	12-13	14-16	17-18	19-20

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The range of work covered a wide gamut of instrumentation and standards. Rarer performing media such as Gu Zheng and Di Zi were represented which is a matter for celebration. Most candidates performed selections from standard Western repertoire that was appropriate to their performance capabilities. Programmes were mostly thoughtfully selected and included suitable, sometimes daring and refreshing diversity. Length of performance requirements

were adhered to, with a few exceptions, and the recording quality was largely of a good standard.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

There was consensus amongst examiners regarding noticeable improvement in the selection of candidate programmes. There were a good number of freshly thought out recitals, where interesting explorations of contrasting musical traditions and idioms were the norm. Developmental considerations were mostly appropriate to each candidate presenting them with suitable challenges.

A few schools however, have room for improvement. The range of exploration demonstrated by their candidates was minimal. Musical selections could be too short and basic to allow for the demonstration of skills; and, at times, the quality of the musical content was quite limited.

Criterion B

Most submissions ranged between mostly adequate and highly consistent technical control. A few candidates performed challenging pieces without demonstrating sufficient attention to technical detail. The situation revealed a difference in standards, more the result of a lack of attention and rigor than from a lack of capabilities. There were also several instances of very fine playing with mature musical technique and understanding.

Criterion C

A larger range of levels achieved in terms of stylistic understanding and expression. The required variety in tone colour, phrasing approach, articulation and dynamics was not always evident the styles selected.

Criterion D

Some to highly effective musical communication was achieved in the recitals. Some schools approach the component in a rather “relaxed” and informal manner and the delivery of the musical content of the pieces through the recordings does not always come to life. Live, successful performance often depends on a heightened energized state of concentration and commitment that generates a “sense of occasion”. Candidates presenting their pieces more formally generally did better in this regard. Attending concerts, listening to recordings, and discussing the dynamics of presentation and delivery in the work of professional musicians from diverse genres may support reflection upon and awareness of the importance of this aspect.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Please ensure that musical accompaniment requirements are carefully considered when selecting the repertoire. If accompaniment is required it needs to be of a high standard. Pianos need to be freshly tuned, the parts need to be accurately and sensitively performed and the candidate should be supported in having adequate rehearsal practice.

Schools must acknowledge that accompaniment tracks that include the candidate's performing part are not suitable for use in this component.

Performing for small audiences is quite fine. The public performance requirement of the component does not require schools to produce concert situations. It is totally valid to have a performance for an audience of classmates or another small group. Similarly, if candidates get very nervous performing in public, all efforts should be made in designing the most supportive situation for their recitals.

Group performing (SLG)

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-3	4-7	8-12	13-14	15-15	16-17	18-20

The range and suitability of the work submitted

There was an interesting range of groups submitted, including choirs, string ensembles and orchestras, symphonic wind bands, jazz and rock bands. Overall, there was a very high standard of work submitted, particularly from many of the choirs and symphonic bands. It was also a pleasure to hear some very sophisticated jazz work which included confident performances.

There were a few instances where the repertoire chosen did not demonstrate the variety required to reach the highest levels of Criterion A. One or two submissions contained duets, where either the instrumental combination was unsuitable or the performance included a significant number of "solo" performances inappropriately submitted as part of the programme. Schools must adhere to requirements ensuring candidates perform in one group for the complete submission and ensuring that work from at least two public performances is submitted.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Overall, there was a very good range of repertoire presented in the samples and generally selections were at a suitable level for the candidates' ability. Most groups demonstrated an ability to meet the technical and stylistic demands of the repertoire, many performing at a very impressive level. Occasionally, unevenness of abilities within a group impacted on the grades awarded for Criterion B. It was good to hear, in so many of the submissions, groups performing to audiences. There is clearly some excellent work in school music programmes, which is a pleasure to hear.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

It was refreshing to hear a balance of masterpieces of the repertory with new works in all genres. Some interesting and enterprising programmes were submitted. As always, fundamentals of ensemble performance continue to need attention, most especially control of the rhythmic pulse and subdivision, intonation and tonal balance and blend, and in some cases, more attention to projecting a forward moving line with care in shaping phrases. These are on-going issues, and it was wonderful to hear the work that goes into resolving some of these technical and musical issues.

Further comments

There were very few significant discrepancies in terms of levels awarded by the teachers, who are mostly applying the criteria thoughtfully and appropriately. There were a couple of

schools which did not fully complete the information on the accompanying form, making the moderation of the work more difficult.

Creating (HL/SLC)

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-5	6-11	12-16	17-19	20-23	24-26	27-30

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Although most work submitted was suited to the task there were various incorrect portfolios, including some with too many pieces, and arrangements not giving a copy (audio or score) of the original which has been worked from. There were also a number of instances of audio CDs not playing properly.

Compositions were by far in the majority and fewer candidates appear to have opted for improvisation in this session.

There appears to be still some confusion in defining pieces as “technology” or “composition”. It should be remembered that the inclusion of electronic instruments does not automatically make a piece “technology” and that examiners are required to assess technology pieces for their use of audio programs and the control and manipulation of sound. Not many candidates included stylistic technique examples in their portfolios. Those who did appear to have been adequately prepared for the task although more attention could be paid to the requirements (for example, modulations) and indicating the given material and where the candidate’s own work begins. There also appears to be some confusion between tasks b and c: chorale and figured bass.

Although most candidates managed to conform to the time limits there were some who chose to include two or more “movements” from a larger work such as a symphony or a concerto. Although this is not forbidden it does tend to limit the variety in the portfolio; having more than one piece with the same instrumentation and possibly even some of the same thematic material, limiting marks in some criteria.

Those presenting arrangements did not always apply themselves creatively to the task and often merely transcribed the music to a new instrumentation instead of adapting the material to a new context.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

Here there was a noticeable difference between candidates who had received teaching in musical techniques and theory and those who, often using a computer program, were working on a trial and error basis which could often lead to music that although it is more or less consonant, lacks direction. Stronger submissions included functional harmony with appropriate bass lines that both defined and supported the harmony. A common error was having uneven textures: music jumping from perhaps six to three voices for no apparent reason with instruments just dropping out or not finishing a phrase.

Stronger entries had well constructed accompaniments for melodies and used counter melodies with imitation or call and response.

The copy and paste function, although very convenient for the recapitulation of material was perhaps overused, particularly when combining different ideas. More care and control of the outcome would have helped.

Criterion B

There seems to have been an increase in the awareness of the necessity to give pieces shape and integrity. Material was generally recycled appropriately although quite often more development or variation would have helped. Once again the copy and paste function, for example, in this case of an ABA composition, can be very useful, but when there was some modification of the material presented for a second time the piece was more effective.

Criterion C

Instruments were generally employed correctly with only a few cases of impossible instrumental parts. Some more care could have been taken with scoring: there were several cases of string quartets with the second violin nearly always having the higher voice, or long passages of one violin part double-stopping or playing divisi while another violin part sits silent. This was probably caused by relying on the aural effect of a computer playback without taking a closer look at individual parts.

Among technology submissions there were examples of very competent and effective use of the chosen programmes.

In “jazz” compositions there was sometimes a lack of understanding of the instruments’ functions- for example having a piano playing the walking bass line while the double bass played long notes or wind instruments acting separately rather than in section.

Criterion D

The quality of notation was generally higher this session. Common errors included transposing instruments (labelled as such) with their parts written in C and a rather widespread tendency to omit phrase markings. These are the sort of minor imperfections that make the difference between a good and an excellent score.

Technology pieces that started out with the idea of being technology pieces made effective use of sound manipulation and were mostly well produced. Other entries that were recordings of pieces that might have been presented as compositions often scored less here, and seemingly considered the production process less important.

Criterion E

Not all candidates considered the possibility of presenting a variety of work in their portfolios. Where more than one piece is presented for a solo monophonic instrument this will inevitably lead to lack of harmonic content in the portfolio. Candidates presenting jazz or rock pieces with “solo” sections tended to leave these sections blank; usually with just chord symbols as one would find in a commercial score. This is not in itself a mistake but limits the creative

content of the piece, particularly if it is just a twelve bar theme followed by solos. More effective entries in this style included transcriptions of solos with chordal accompaniments fully written out, and perhaps accompanying riffs from the ensemble, thus making the piece more substantial.

Criterion F

Reflections were better in this session with many candidates methodically reflecting on intention, process and outcome.

The most common error by far was to omit any mention of outcome.

Candidates scoring less well in this criterion were generally those who did not have a clear idea of what the reflection was for. Some saw it as an introduction, others as moment to talk about personal matters that were indirectly linked to the music.

Reflections for technology pieces not always gave an account of the technological process, whereas this can be an opportunity to draw the examiner's attention to what has been done. Good "outcomes" mentioned what had been learned from the process and whether the pieces had lived up to or even surpassed the original intentions. Less effective outcomes limited themselves to saying how the composer was pleased with the piece.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Before submitting scores candidates could try reading them through and asking themselves "Could I reproduce my piece from this?"

When presenting pieces in specific styles such as "jazz", "blues" or "tango" some analytical listening to pieces from these genres to understand instrumental functions can be helpful. Candidates with some capacity for spontaneous expression on their chosen instrument could be encouraged to try the improvisation option.

Even candidates who are presenting (what they imagine to be) strong portfolios should confront the reflection task seriously.

Paper 1 (Listening paper) (HL)

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-19	20-39	40-53	54-66	67-80	81-93	94-140

Paper 1 (Listening paper) (SLS, SLG, SLC)

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-11	12-23	24-39	40-49	50-58	59-68	69-100

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for candidates

As it is now becoming an unfortunate trend, some candidates seem to struggle to understand the questions in section A. Many candidates appear to memorize facts about the prescribed works and try to 'place' them in their responses disregarding what the question is asking them. This marks the difference between a candidate that has an understanding of the pieces and a candidate who merely memorized certain facts.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

It was a pleasant surprise to see that most candidates recognized the sitar. This would not have been the case even ten years ago and seems to confirm the perception that schools are making more effort to ensure candidates are becoming familiar with world music.

The strengths and weaknesses of candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Question 1

In general candidates seemed to have the knowledge but struggled in the delivery of the question. At times, candidates described musical devices but forgot to mention if the device represented 18th or 20th century influences. On other occasions candidates mentioned elements that were general to many periods and not a particular feature of one or the other of these two relevant periods. Often candidates wrote memorized analysis of the piece but disregarded the demands of the question. There were some candidates who presented focused answers but these were the minority.

Question 2

In general the candidates that attempted this question had something to say. The main issue in here was probably candidates mentioning a 'programme' but not relating it to a specific musical device.

Question 3

This was probably the question where candidates struggled the most. Few were the candidates that focused on construction of the melody. In general candidates described form, orchestration or other elements instead of the well-described construction of the melody. This may have been due to memorization of facts or features of one or both works rather than careful critical thinking related to the focus of the question.

Question 4

This question received in general good treatment. Surprisingly, taking into consideration that the composer was Beethoven and was identified, candidates offered few contextual comments.

Question 5

Few candidates recognized the harp or the youth choir. Meter and some texture were recognized. Many candidates described the piece as renaissance with extremely few placing Britten in context.

Question 6

In general a successful answer with most of the candidates recognizing the sitar and establishing contextual references to its influence. Structural comments were reasonable as was the instrument, meter and texture comments.

Question 7

A very challenging question in terms of context with many theories ranging from "Mariachi" to "Flamenco" being offered. Meter was not well perceived with the exception of few candidates. Instrumentation, on the other hand did not seem to present challenges.

Question 8

Few were the candidates that presented 'substantial' links.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

This comment will seem obvious but candidates need to use critical thinking in relation to music. Simple memorization does not help for sections A and C. The candidates need to 'understand' music and think critically about it. Critical thinking needs to be fostered. It does not emerge by itself.

Musical Links Investigation (HL, SLS, SLG, SLC)

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-14	15-17	18-20

The range and suitability of the work submitted

There was a wide range of work submitted, although this session there was less evidence of really excellent work. A few candidates showed the depth of detail required to achieve highest marks, but the examiners have noted that a great many scripts lack the understanding of what is required overall for the musical links investigation (MLI). It was a concern that many submissions had very short word counts, sometimes as low as 500 words. Many candidates struggled to make appropriate links that allowed enough scope for sustained investigation, although in general, there was more success in the selection of musical cultures with some quite interesting musical examples being chosen.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

There was variable success in the choice of musical cultures, although this aspect was more successfully addressed than in previous years. There is more issue with finding musical links, which were often non-musical or not specific to the essential elements of music. Instrumentation continues to be often used inappropriately. If "melody" or "rhythm" are chosen, it is helpful to articulate the aspect that is the link. Candidates need to ensure that the links listed on the cover sheet match the musical links that are discussed in the investigation.

Criterion B

The most successful investigations demonstrated an ability to frame an analysis within the context of the chosen culture and support their arguments with notated musical evidence. It is not sufficient to provide just audio examples which require the examiner to listen to the tracks. CDs, where submitted are for support of the script which should stand alone as if the CD had not been submitted. Whilst sustained investigation of the musical examples through the chosen links is important, analysis of other musical features, both similarities and differences will often add breadth and depth to the investigation as a whole.

Criterion C

There was a wide range of achievement in this criterion. Candidates who provided a high level of musical detail had greater opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge of musical terminology, but there were also many candidates who could use the musical terminologies appropriate to their chosen culture even if these were not specifically applied to the musical examples.

Criterion D

Many investigations were enriched by good musical examples, diagrams, tables and illustrations, and there were some highly professional looking presentations, especially in the magazine format. There was evidence of creativity in the choice of formats, which included CD covers, programme notes, newsletters etc. It is good to see candidates utilizing current media formats such as blogs and twitter. The weaker formats remain radio scripts and PowerPoint presentations.

Referencing was variable across the submissions. Whilst a good number of candidates incorporated footnotes and references within the body of the text as well as thorough bibliographies, there are still an equal number of candidates who do not. Musical examples were often not referenced and paraphrasing was left uncited. Several candidates did not list a discography or did not make clear where their primary sources were accessed. Candidates should be encouraged to question the authenticity of many on-line websites - the scholarly level of some of these is questionable.

Criterion E

The achievement of most candidates in criterion E was moderate. There were a few candidates who truly demonstrated creativity, depth and engagement. The depth of intellectual understanding was often limited with some candidates.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers are strongly encouraged to incorporate pre-tasks into their teaching schedule in order to best prepare candidates for the MLI component. Part of this preparation should include score reading and analysis along with listening in preparation for analysis. Increasing the amount of instruction devoted to musical analysis and to how candidates should conduct an independent analysis would bolster candidate understanding and achievement. Teachers are reminded again, that CDs accompanying the ML's are for support only and should contain no more than 5 minutes of material.