GCSE Examiners' Report

Music

GCSE
Summer 2026

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Introduction

Our Principal Examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and details how candidates have performed in each component.

This report opens with a summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.[1]

The information found in this report provides valuable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

Further support

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	Eduqas offers an extensive programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	https://www.eduqas.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 12 months after the examination.	Portal by WJEC or on the Eduqas subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For unitised specifications grade boundaries are expressed on a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS). UMS grade boundaries remain the same every year as the range of UMS mark percentages allocated to a particular grade does not change. UMS grade boundaries are published at overall subject and component level. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each component that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For unitised specifications click here: Results and Grade Boundaries and PRS (eduqas.co.uk)

[1] ***Please note that where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.***

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Exam Results Analysis	Eduqas provides information to examination centres via the WJEC Portal. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	Portal by WJEC
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/
Bank of Professional Learning materials	Access our bank of Professional Learning materials from previous events from our secure website and additional pre-recorded materials available in the public domain.	Portal by WJEC or on the Eduqas subject page.
Become an examiner with WJEC.	We are always looking to recruit new examiners or moderators. These opportunities can provide you with valuable insight into the assessment process, enhance your skill set, increase your understanding of your subject and inform your teaching.	Become an Examiner | Eduqas

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Executive Summary

The Summer 2026 GCSE Music report highlights generally positive outcomes across all three components, with standards broadly comparable to previous years and many centres demonstrating a secure understanding of the specification. Across the qualification, successful candidates were those who combined strong musical knowledge, careful preparation, accurate administration and clear understanding of assessment requirements. Common issues across all components related to administrative accuracy, inconsistent application of assessment criteria, limited use of musical vocabulary and weaknesses in the development and communication of musical ideas.

In Component 1 Performing, candidates presented a wide range of repertoire and performance styles, with rock, musical theatre and graded examination repertoire proving especially popular. Most centres submitted work accurately, met deadlines and organised recordings and documentation effectively. Recording quality continued to improve and many candidates demonstrated strong technical skills, musical confidence and expressive communication. Ensemble performances were often particularly successful when arrangements had been tailored to candidates and individual roles were clearly defined. However, recurring issues included inaccurate timing calculations, incomplete or unsuitable scores, administrative errors on documentation and misunderstanding of ensemble requirements. Moderators also reported concerns with recordings that had been edited, poor balance in ensemble recordings and candidates being obscured by accompanying performers. In terms of skills and knowledge, some centres incorrectly assessed levels of difficulty, over-rewarded weaker performances and failed to distinguish accurately between accuracy and technical control. There was also confusion surrounding sequenced performances, particularly regarding live performance requirements and the appropriate treatment of backing tracks.

Component 2 Composing demonstrated a broad range of achievement, from highly imaginative and sophisticated work to compositions with limited development and technical control. The strongest candidates showed originality, effective planning, creative development of ideas and secure control of melody, harmony, structure and texture. Successful submissions responded convincingly to their chosen briefs and demonstrated stylistic awareness alongside confident manipulation of musical elements. Free compositions often reflected candidates' personal musical interests and produced some of the most engaging work. However, moderators identified creativity and development of ideas as the weakest assessment area overall. Many weaker compositions relied on repetition, simplistic harmonic progressions, short motifs, loops or DAW-generated material rather than original musical development. Structural weaknesses, formulaic approaches and insufficient responses to briefs were common. Administrative issues included incorrect file labelling, missing documentation, inaccessible file formats, incomplete candidate logs and audio problems. Logs frequently lacked essential information about compositional decisions, influences and the use of non-original material. Moderators also expressed concerns regarding the use of other performers without sufficient evidence of the candidate's musical contribution, making authorship difficult to verify in some cases.

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In Component 3 Appraising, candidates were generally familiar with the structure of the examination and demonstrated improved confidence when discussing music. Strong performances were evident in comparison questions and extended responses where candidates successfully linked musical features to the purpose and intention of the music. Many candidates displayed musical awareness and analytical understanding, particularly when discussing film music and popular music extracts. However, knowledge of the set works was often insufficient, despite these works having appeared for several years. Examiners reported weaknesses in harmonic understanding, identification of cadences, modulation and theoretical concepts. Candidates frequently struggled to describe musical features using precise terminology and often confused musical elements with performance techniques. Dictation remained a significant area of weakness, particularly in recognising key signatures, pitch and notation conventions. Problems also arose when candidates failed to focus on the correct extract or version when comparing music.

Across all three components, the report emphasises the importance of strong musical literacy, stylistic understanding, originality and careful administration. The most successful candidates demonstrated secure knowledge, effective technical skills, confident use of musical vocabulary and a clear understanding of assessment expectations. Future improvement would be supported by more accurate documentation, stronger engagement with assessment criteria, greater attention to musical development and increased familiarity with the set works and theoretical concepts that underpin successful musical performance, composition and appraisal.

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COMPONENT 1 PERFORMING

Overview of the Component

It was pleasing to observe that the standard of submissions was comparable to submissions of previous years with most centres demonstrating a good understanding of the requirements of the specification. There was a broad range of repertoire and performance styles represented across the samples and moderators reported that most centres had uploaded their submissions accurately. The increased sample size aided moderation as it prevented the inevitable delays incurred by requesting additional work from centres.

Most centres demonstrated excellent compliance with deadlines, with very few centres uploading after the submission date.

Moderators appreciated the swift response by examination officers and music departments in rectifying issues. We thank you for this.

The main problems reported by moderators this year:

- Inaccurate timing of performances
- Centres not responding to feedback made by moderators in previous years' reports which had highlighted any issues with submissions, resulting in issues being repeated
- Unsuitable scores, lacking the detail required to agree marks for accuracy
- Unison singing in ensembles that had been counted towards the overall timing
- Understanding of the requirements for sequenced performance (this is dealt with under a separate heading in this document).

ADMINISTRATION

Most centres completed the administration correctly and had clearly organised and labelled submissions which adhered to the document on the website: *Eduqas GCSE Music NEA Upload Processes for 2026.* These centres had uploaded the correct marksheets for 2026, a completed *Performing Marks Penalties 2026* form listing ALL candidates, clearly labelled recordings and accurate scores.

However, many moderators commented that inaccurate marksheets did hinder the moderation process, with many centres having to be contacted with issues such as:

- missing candidate and/or teacher signatures
- lack of detail regarding the role of the candidate in ensemble performances
- missing/inadequate scores
- files in incorrect format, for example, video performances and several JPEG pages scanned individually and uploaded for each piece
- candidate names not matching names on IAMIS.

Dealing with administrative errors and contacting centres is a very time-consuming part of the moderating process. There were also errors in addition, scaling and errors in transferring the correct marks to IAMIS.

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PLEASE DO NOT UPLOAD ZIP FILES OR ANY VIDEO FILES.

It was also greatly appreciated when centres converted their Word marksheet document to PDF. This made the moderation process flow with ease.

LEVELS OF DIFFICULTY

Excellent practice was observed in most centres, where the appropriate level of difficulty was recorded for all candidates, for example, “ESL”, “SL” or “MD”. Please do not use any other abbreviation.

It was appreciated when centres noted on their marksheets that candidate scores had been checked by the exam board.

Moderators reported an increase in the number of centres that were only submitting sections of a song or piece rather than the full piece and then awarding the level of difficulty for the whole original piece. In some cases, the more challenging sections were omitted. Similarly, if Ofqual accredited exam board pieces (for example, Trinity or Rockschool) are annotated for submission, they may be considered below or above the original grade.

It was pleasing to observe that fewer centres submitted solo pieces with audible click tracks this year. At GCSE, they are permitted but not recommended, as this is not a graded examination, but an assessment of performing. When assessing such performances, it is important to consider the impact of the click track on the performance. If the candidate is quite clearly playing confidently at that level, then marks may be agreed, but if the moderator believes that the click track is supporting the candidate to a greater degree than acceptable, the level of difficulty may be lowered.

RECORDINGS

The quality of recordings continued to improve this year with some very high-quality recorded submissions. This undoubtedly gave candidates the best opportunity to demonstrate their abilities, being heard clearly and effectively. Fewer centres gave long and unnecessary announcements at the start of recordings. Most were well-balanced, allowing the candidate to be heard clearly throughout. Where recordings were generally of a good quality across solo performances, the balance of recordings for ensemble was not always of the same quality. Some candidates were inaudible, overpowered by supporting performers, or masked by others playing a similar line; this made the moderation process very difficult.

There were also more recordings which had taken place in public venues, where, on occasion, the balance and background noise were a distracting factor from the focus on the candidate.

Some recordings were edited; please note that the specification states: “Each piece needs to be recorded in one unedited attempt”. Please do not cut the recordings before the end of the performance.

There appeared to be an increase in centres uploading WAV files this year. The *Eduqas GCSE Music NEA Upload Processes for 2026* required recordings to be uploaded in mp3 format. Video recordings are not accepted.

PLEASE CHECK RECORDINGS BEFORE UPLOADING.

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SCORES

Scores were generally presented and annotated very well, accurately reflecting what the candidate intended to perform, which greatly helped the moderation process. This is essential to agree marks for accuracy.

More candidates are learning pieces by ear, but, to award marks for accuracy, it is vital that the performance matches the score. YouTube links or reference recordings are not acceptable in lieu of a score.

An increasing number of centres uploaded scores as JPEG or PNG files rather than PDFs, which considerably delayed moderation. Such files were sometimes difficult to open efficiently, and when a PNG file was uploaded in the sample, this did require additional steps to access. File sizes are also significantly larger when JPEG or PNG. Centres should at every opportunity upload as PDF. Several centres uploaded score pages as individual image files rather than combining them into a single PDF which also created difficulty during moderation as several were uploaded in the incorrect order, upside down or were of poor quality.

Issues to be addressed:

- All lead sheets must contain the melody, rhythm, tempo markings, dynamics and other performance directions as appropriate (lyrics with chords are not acceptable)
- All scores must be accurately annotated with the candidate's intention
- Rap scores must contain rhythm patterns, bar lines and other performance directions as necessary
- The candidate's role in an ensemble should be highlighted or clearly marked. Wherever possible, please upload the candidate's score only rather than the score for the whole ensemble
- If a graded piece is submitted and the candidate plays a simpler version, omitting notes or sections, the level of difficulty may change. The converse also applies to candidates performing a more complex arrangement of the score
- Tab scores must contain rhythms and performance directions
- Please ensure that lead sheets for DJ performances contain timings and all details of the process.

TIMINGS

Most candidates met the minimum time requirements, often adding extra pieces as appropriate to meet the minimum timing. Where students had not met the required minimum time, most centres had calculated timings accurately and applied the appropriate timing penalties to the marks.

However, moderators reported more instances where centres had stated the timing of the entire recording rather than from the candidate's first performed note and ending on the final note; as a result, several candidates incurred timing penalties which were reported as Clerical Errors on IAMIS.

This year, there was an increase in folios which exceeded 6 minutes, submitting 3 or 4 pieces, when the 4-minute timing requirement had been met with the first 2 pieces. In a few examples, these extra pieces did not reach the standard of the first two pieces, thus affecting the overall candidate mark.

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Some moderators reported ensembles which were under one minute in duration. Please note that such ensembles do not offer the evidence to award marks in the highest band. Timings should not:

- Begin from the start of the track and end when the track finishes
- Include an unnecessary spoken introduction of the candidate
- Include any sections where the candidate is not performing, for example, introductions and several bars' rest during the piece
- Include unison sections in ensemble performances (if the candidate performs such sections as a solo, these may be included in the overall timing of the folio).

REPERTOIRE

Overall, repertoire choices were generally appropriate covering many different genres and styles. Rock music and musical theatre were particularly popular choices. These genres can be demanding both technically and musically, and many candidates showed a good level of skill and confidence in their performances.

Many centres selected repertoire from established examination syllabuses such as ABRSM, Trinity Rock & Pop and RockSchool, which supported accurate judgements of levels of difficulty.

Come Together on drum kit for solo and ensemble and *Smells Like Teen Spirit* for electric and bass guitar were popular choices, and it was pleasing to see that there are now so many different vocal "mashups" at each level of difficulty. Sadly, there is increasing evidence of a limited variety in the instruments being performed at GCSE with fewer classical instrumental performances. However, some moderators reported outstanding performances on French horn, bassoon and viola.

More centres offered sequenced performances this year, some of which were excellent. Information regarding sequenced performances is detailed under a separate heading.

ENSEMBLE

Many of the strongest ensemble performances came from music that had been arranged specifically for the candidates by their teachers. These arrangements often made each performer's role very clear and were supported by well-presented scores. Equally successful were published arrangements, where the candidate played an independent instrumental part or vocal harmony. This clear musical interplay provided the definitive evidence required to award marks in the highest band.

Where candidates accompanied other performers, particularly pianists working alongside singers or instrumentalists, there was often strong evidence of ensemble awareness and interaction.

For many centres, ensemble repertoire continues to be an issue. There were several instances of centres adding additional parts to graded solo repertoire. This was problematic when the other part added to the ensemble only added to the accompaniment, and therefore the candidate was still performing as a soloist. Several centres continue to submit RockSchool and Trinity Rock & Pop graded solo electric guitar repertoire with live bass guitar and drums. Such performances meet the solo requirements of the specification. The addition of a singer or someone performing the vocal melody is necessary to meet the ensemble requirement.

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This year, several moderators reported that vocal and guitar (electric and bass) ensemble submissions contained much unison singing or playing. Please note that such sections, as mentioned under “TIMING” in this report, must not be included in the timing of the folio. The specification states that candidates should “perform a significant individual part which is not doubled”.

SEQUENCED PERFORMANCE

There was a marked increase in sequenced performance submissions this year. Some were excellent, deserving of marks in the upper bands, but there was some level of confusion from centres as to what should be submitted in terms of sequenced performances. Listed below are some of the issues encountered by moderators with sequenced performances this year:

- Centres misunderstanding the way that the “live track” should be captured, and recording it into the DAW rather than performing it live in the room with the “sequence” playing as a backing track
- Centres’ misunderstanding how the Sequenced Performance should be approached as an ensemble. Some centres treated the sequenced tracks as the other “live part.” Centres need to be aware that for an ensemble, a minimum of two performers need to perform simultaneously in the room, as in a regular ensemble performance, with the remaining sequenced tracks acting as a backing track. The assessment of ensemble would consider how well the live parts and the sequenced parts work together as a whole
- Recordings – Often, the candidate’s part was either too quiet and drowned out by the backing track, or it was too loud and made hearing the sequenced tracks difficult. A sound check is essential for this kind of submission, as the sequenced tracks must also be distinguishable for the moderator to assess
- Scores - The scores submitted by centres need to be fully notated scores for moderation to take place effectively. While a graphic score may be suitable for a student pack within the classroom, it is difficult to follow such packs as accurate scores when assessing. Centres that included a screenshot of the DAW project were particularly helpful, as it made it clear what tracks had been sequenced, and which were the live candidate parts
- Audio Tracks – Some centres included audio tracks that the candidates then edited and placed in their projects. Pre-recorded audio that is not the candidate’s work is not what is meant by “live parts” in the specification. Tracks must be drawn in or played in to Instrument/MIDI tracks for the sequenced parts of this submission
- Candidate “live part” - Some centres recorded their live parts into the DAW rather than play these live in the room to be captured like a regular performance with a backing track of their other sequenced parts. Some centres had then gone on to edit these “live parts” further in the DAW, cutting, copying and pasting to create their track. The live part must be one continuous, unedited track, recorded in one take. Where a live part has been edited, only one section of the track can be assessed and none of the subsequent copied and pasted sections
- Levels of difficulty need to be considered carefully; for example, if the sequenced and live parts are very simple, then the level of difficulty may be Easier than Standard Level and care must be taken to ensure there is sufficient evidence to justify a mark in the top band.

MARKING

In most cases, teacher assessment was accurate and aligned closely with the moderation outcomes. Centres generally applied the assessment criteria fairly and consistently, awarding candidate marks thoughtfully in the appropriate band across Accuracy, Technical Control and Expression and Interpretation.

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A few moderators observed that some centres awarded marks such as 11, 11, 11 (resulting in 33 and then adjusted to 36 through the More Difficult Level of Difficulty), despite performances demonstrating qualities that would justify full marks of 12, 12, 12. While this did not affect final outcomes, centres should ensure candidates receive full recognition where performances demonstrate exceptional quality.

Conversely, a small number of centres awarded very low Band 1 marks, and, in a few examples, Band 0. These decisions did not always reflect the evidence within the performance. Although assessing weaker performances can be challenging, candidates who demonstrate some degree of accuracy or technical control should receive credit that reflects achievement appropriately.

Again, this year, there were still several performances which did not meet the Easier than Standard Level of Difficulty criteria and had then been too generously marked with centres awarding marks in the top bands. Such performances do not offer the evidence to award marks in the upper bands. This issue is highlighted annually at Eduqas CPD meetings.

ACCURACY

Accuracy was the column most frequently marked generously, mostly linked to scores or lead sheets being inaccurate to the performance or lacking in detail. In several cases, it was difficult to agree with marks placed in Band 4 when the score provided very little justification for such a placement. Centres should ensure that all scores are fully annotated to support accurate assessment, and to allow moderators to verify the centre's marking decisions with confidence.

Please note that "tempo" should be assessed under Accuracy. Some moderators reported that several pieces were performed under tempo and subsequently awarded high marks where a mark in a lower band may have been more appropriate. Marks for Accuracy were marked severely by some centres for some lower-range candidates, where marks had already been deducted in Technical Control for intonation issues. In some scenarios, it was clear that candidates were being double or even triple penalised with other columns being highly influenced by the Accuracy column.

Some lower ability candidates were negatively affected by playing difficult pieces that were beyond their abilities, where the same mistakes were repeated or fluency significantly compromised.

TECHNICAL CONTROL

Marks for Technical Control were generally in line with the standard; however, there were times where marks were generous in the top band when consistent technical control and intonation had not been demonstrated throughout the performance.

I cannot emphasise enough the need to avoid double penalising candidates under Accuracy and Technical Control, which has been mentioned above under "Accuracy". Further information may be found in the "Component 1 Performing Amplification Criteria" document, available in the link below and on the website, which states:

- Is the performance in tune throughout? Note that occasional out of tune notes could be classed as errors in accuracy (column 1) but more constant intonation issues are technical control (column 2.) Do not "penalise" a candidate twice for the same error.
- Is the technique convincing and appropriate to this level? The standard level of difficulty is equivalent to Grade 3. A very simple piece would not provide an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate evidence to support marks in a higher band. For example, normal piano technique involves using two hands independently.
  https://www.eduqas.co.uk/media/if2hcyuh/eduqas-gcse-music-component-1-performing-criteria-amplification.pdf

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EXPRESSION AND INTERPRETATION

Marking in this column was judged by moderators to be mostly secure, with many candidates offering stylish and expressive performances. Successful ensemble performances offered evidence of effective rapport, empathy, and interaction between the performers. It is important to note that evidence of interaction and empathy must be displayed to access top marks. Ensembles which do not demonstrate empathy and interaction between the performers do not provide evidence in the context of an ensemble to award marks in the upper bands.

Balance between performers in ensembles and soloists with accompaniment was sometimes an issue and again, centres are urged to check recordings in advance of submission.

May I thank all teachers who have been involved in the preparation of candidates for Component 1 Performing and their diligence in supporting the moderation process.

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COMPONENT 2 COMPOSING

Overview of the Component

This year a variety of standards were presented across the full range for consideration by the moderating team. Feedback and details on the assessment and administration are covered in the relevant sections below.

Overview

There are no penalties in this Component for candidates not reaching the minimum time requirement, or for exceeding the maximum time requirement. Assessment must reflect the musical content: while short pieces are often self-penalising as they lack sufficient development of the initial ideas, overly long compositions tend to lack structural focus, and are very repetitive. Best practice was praised when submissions were completed thoughtfully and correctly as according to Eduqas guidelines, with careful attention paid to the exact requirements of the compositional briefs and the assessment criteria.

Centre Assessments

Moderators reported on a huge variation in the quality of teacher assessment. For a secure understanding of standards in this Component, centres must consider the exemplar materials on the website and have a clear grasp of the assessment criteria, moderating with other colleagues if possible. Judgements were usually more accurate at either end of the range but there were many cases of inconsistent marking. Centre assessors are advised to initially consider whether the standard of the work reflects the **skilful** and **highly effective**, **competent, simple** or **limited** content as presented in the four assessment bands, before considering the separate criteria, remembering that a ‘best fit’ assessment approach is taken within any one column.

Unfortunately, centre marks did not reflect the content correctly in many instances. Generous marking was common, especially in the mid and upper range.

There were many examples where centres appeared to reward the overall production quality or surface effectiveness of a piece rather than the musical content required by the criteria. This was particularly evident in some technology-based submissions, where sonority and texture were effective, but melodic, harmonic, rhythmic or structural control and variety were less convincing. Conversely, there were some examples of harsh marking, usually when the effective motivic development, idiomatic instrumental writing or well-controlled musical elements had not been fully credited. The strongest submissions demonstrated clear planning and thoughtful refinement and creative development of ideas, reflecting obvious technical control of the musical elements. Weaker responses relied on repetition, limited development, insecure technical control and an over-reliance on DAW-generated material. Technology was controlled to enhance the musical ideas.

When candidates had used loops or other musical material which was not their own, it was unclear whether this had been factored into the marking. Such information could be included in the teacher comments section for the external moderator. There appeared to be a trend of centres awarding their top candidates high marks because they are the best in their cohort, but unfortunately the work at times simply did not meet band 4 criteria. To meet the ‘highly effective’ criteria, the work should be commensurate with the more substantial and advanced content listed in Appendix C of the specification.

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AO2.1a Creativity and development of musical ideas

Most moderators (though not all) stated that this was the weakest area, where the quality of the initial thematic material (including pitch, rhythm and harmony) is credited.

The strongest compositions included highly effective and advanced musicianship in the melodic and harmonic content when considered alongside the musical features outlined in Appendix C of the specification, and candidates created variety and contrasts within their work. This was often achieved through melodic and harmonic development as well as effective textural development.

In less successful submissions, harmonic and textural exploration and structural clarity was lacking, and contrasts of tone colour and mood were not sufficiently considered, often overly reliant on direct repetition, and reliant on short motifs, drones, ostinatos, basic triadic shapes and chord patterns. Such simplistic outcomes were best aligned with band 2. Many candidates had not grasped the idea of development compared to change, and some struggled with composing effective melodies; the ideas were often angular and disjunct with basic and limited accompaniment ideas and often not coherent.

Weaker compositions with random collections of ideas were often overmarked. Some candidates used lyrics from well-known songs and changed the melody- a practice which is not advised, as the rhythmic ideas, phrasing and even chord choices were often dependent on the original and therefore could not be credited as the candidates' original creation.

Future candidates must be reminded that reliance on non-original material, including pre-made loops, effects, arpeggiators and synth sounds which, although may give the desired effect, are not their own original ideas and as such, cannot be credited. The focus must be on the musical elements as outlined in Appendix C.

AO2.1b Technical control of musical elements and resources

The strongest compositions had clear harmonic foundations and showed understanding of thoughtful chord progressions, modulations, passing keys and cadences, melodic, rhythmic and textural features and devices. When these, alongside other musical elements such as the use of dynamics, tempo changes, articulation and text setting were skilfully deployed, the musical content reflected secure technical control.

Weaker compositions demonstrated less effective technical control with limited material, frequent harmonic imbalance or unintended dissonance, and a lack of melodic phrasing and rhythmic understanding. This column was judged very generously by some centres, where the content did not include a wide variety of the elements, and the control was questionable. Accompaniment patterns mostly remained unchanged and were sometimes inappropriate. Some candidates had performed their own songs but sang out of tune – unfortunately in this situation the harmonic control was impacted. In this situation, moderators suggested that the candidates play their melodic ideas, taking the lyrics carefully into consideration to ensure an accurate reflection of their musical intentions. Misapplication of the mark scheme was often noted when high marks were awarded for pieces which contained striking misjudgements between melody and harmony. This often renders a piece inconsistent rather than generally effective but was not always acknowledged by the centre assessment.

Centres should be aware that simple instrumental writing is unlikely to meet the expectations of highest mark bands, even if a wide range of resources has been selected. In some cases, candidates added many instrumental layers but they were not always utilised effectively and contributed little to the overall musical outcome. Piano writing was frequently simplistic utilising basic block chords rather than more idiomatic styling. At this level, the rhythms, patterns and structures were not well managed, and results also lacked effective control of dynamics and articulation.

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Technology based compositions were generally strongest when the candidates demonstrated general compositional ownership rather than a reliance on loops. Candidates must be respectfully reminded that this is not a technology component: though some are keen to show evidence of their technology use (for example, splitting samples, sequencing, automation and the like), credit in this column focuses on the control of the musical elements. What must be demonstrated is a secure understanding and control of musical content and compositional techniques **with technology being an aid in this**. When the use of loops and samples were not declared correctly in the candidate log, moderators explained that it was sometimes difficult to judge the content in this column, as the candidates' exact input was ambiguous.

AO2.1c Structure and stylistic coherence

This area was slightly better judged by centres. There were plenty of extremely stylistic compositions that were structured well and fully coherent. The issues came down to the use of pre-existing, rigid structures that did not allow for creative freedom, or very repetitive structures that lacked contrast - the results of which were often overestimated.

Candidates at the higher range composed music that fitted their chosen brief and style appropriately, producing compositions which were memorable and highly imaginative, showing an exceptional level of mature musical understanding as the materials were well organised, musically coherent and stylistically convincing. Errors were made when incorrect decisions were evident or there had been insufficient attention paid to the requirements of the brief. For example, when ideas were not carefully organised and were inconsistent, this related to band 2 and was often not recognised as such. In all previous Principal Moderator reports, the advice has been to avoid 'fade-outs' i.e., when the composition does not have a satisfying conclusion, stops abruptly, or maybe ends unconvincingly (such as on a subdominant chord).

All moderators commented on the difficulties in assessing many musical responses to a brief. For example, when there was clearly an inaccurate response to the brief, when no brief was given by the candidate, or when the brief was vague. If the stated intention of the brief had just not been achieved (for example, if the intention had been to compose a song, but no words or even a vocal line has been included, or when the intention was stated as a recognisable style such as a Waltz, but the content is in common time throughout) then the assessment was affected negatively.

The outcomes must be considered alongside the assessment grid, and such decisions affected the marks. Many issues outlined above could easily have been remedied.

Responses to the chosen set briefs

Many candidates engaged meaningfully with the compositional process, responding thoughtfully to the parameters of the task to achieve effective and imaginative pieces, particularly when candidates had a clear sense of intention and where their supporting documentation helped to clarify the musical decisions made. Moderators agreed that all four briefs offered a good choice this year, though some candidates slightly altered, reinterpreted or abbreviated the set briefs which unfortunately led to them not always achieving the appropriate outcome to their selected briefs (for example, 'I have chosen to compose a romantic theme between two Vikings'). Such choices did not support marks in the top bands. Where candidates opted to complete the same brief in the cohort, similar outcomes were achieved and individual creativity was often compromised. One centre used the Welsh set briefs rather than the Eduqas set briefs.

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Comments on individual questions/sections

Areas of Study.

1. Musical Forms and Devices
Write a composition for a 'Music for Youth' event. It must be in a clear structure and show contrast and development of the main ideas.

This was a popular choice, generally well-executed and flexible enough to be suited to a wide variety of interpretations.

The most common responses were in more traditional styles and structures, with the strongest responses demonstrating a clear sense of occasion and structural conviction, with development and contrasts of material that were highly effective and planned.

Mid-range outcomes presented pleasing initial content though the contrast and development of ideas was less successful; some results included exact repeats to extend the composition (not advisable, particularly in response to the wording of the brief).

Weaker submissions were extremely basic and repetitive and did not display a sufficient grasp of the musical elements. The outcomes lacked development, sometimes using naïve minimalist techniques to alter their ideas with clear limitations and inconsistencies, creating compositions that were not coherent or well structured.

Some candidates interpreted the brief as being an event for very small children and responded to the challenge with extremely simplistic outcomes inspired by nursery rhymes or fairy tales. This affected credit.

2. Music for Ensemble
Compose a piece of music for four instruments (not voices) to be performed in a chamber music festival which has been arranged in your local area.

A less frequent choice but many good responses, with moderators reporting a wide variety of styles and standards though a mixed level of success.

The strongest responses showed independence between parts, idiomatic instrumental writing and effective interaction between performers; the use of texture was often interesting as many ensembles displayed effective interplay (for example, string quartets brass quartets jazz quartets, or similar).

Moderators also reported of weaker responses where the melodic material was doubled, or when the main melodic interests was carried almost entirely in one part with the other three lines supporting or relying on a basic block chord accompaniment, thus affecting the extent to which candidates could demonstrate textual control, contrast and effective use of the ensemble.

A worrying number of candidates choosing this option wrote for more or fewer than the required number of instruments: there was a duet for piano and violin, another counted the right and left hand piano parts as two separate instruments, there were compositions for four instruments plus a percussion/piano line that made the piece a quintet, as well as other pieces that used up to 6 or 7 instruments. There were also attempts to write for 'bands' (which did not meet the criteria of a chamber music festival) and other pieces where the instrumental choices simply did not blend together well. This obviously affected assessment.

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3. Film music

Compose theme music for a new film about the Viking invasions of England.

This was an extremely popular choice of set brief. Many responses and logs showed research into what the music from this period may have sounded like (exploration of modes being an example). Many candidates relied on suggestions given in a social media video guide which provided massive scaffolding on the structure, instrumentation and musical ideas (drones, low pedal notes, taiko drums, key/Dorian mode, short motivic ideas). It was agreed that many captured the 'Viking' atmosphere, but the extremely predictable and formulaic approach resulted in similar, extremely simple outcomes almost devoid of individuality and personal creativity. In terms of responding appropriately to the set brief, many candidates did not capture the sense of 'invasion' and very few included a distinctive and well-crafted 'theme' that could be developed throughout their piece. Most were 'soundscapes' and many were heavily reliant on repetition, including little significant melodic, rhythmic or harmonic invention. In these cases, marks given by centres were often vastly exaggerated.

Other misinterpretations of the brief included compositions which were intended as music for a TV show (therefore not realising the need to be more 'cinematic' in style); some adopted a 'jolly pirate' approach, and there were also examples of reflective, sad or romantic compositions which were not a convincing response to the brief.

The most successful compositions presented strong and identifiable thematic material, highly effective and skilfully developed.

4. Popular music

Compose a pop song (including a vocal line] to be performed in a local 'Red Nose Day' closed fundraising event.

Another popular option. Moderators reported of some excellent submissions here, with clear structures, catchy lyrics and effective text-setting, memorable choruses, which successfully encapsulated the positive feeling of charity and a 'can do attitude' in fundraising, as well as fulfilling the musical expectations, with interesting melodic rhythmic and harmonic variations and textural interest presented across the vocal and the accompaniments. The strongest and most impressive pieces were those where the candidates were singers and effectively performed and recorded their ideas themselves, demonstrating a secure sense of pitch and musicality. Others experienced difficulties with intonation and pitch accuracy, which at times obscured the clarity and definition of the melodic contour.

One recurring issue was the submission of 'songs' without lyrics or even a 'sung' element, - i.e., purely instrumental pieces - some even without a distinctive melody (though in some, one had apparently been written according to the supporting documentation…but not submitted).

Another very important issue for moderators were those pieces where the vocal had been sung by someone other than the candidate, with no or insufficient information about how these had been created, and no guide tracks provided. These often did not seem to be penalised by the teacher; indeed, moderators reported of several centres where teachers were singing the songs and embellishing. Even when there was a score, some were correcting notes and adjusting the written melody to fit in with the chords, and adding embellishments like riffs, runs, ornaments, harmony lines and other interpretations.

Some centres did offer a guide track, though this was in the minority of cases. In some cases, the guide tracks did not fit with the lyrics provided.

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Whilst some candidates composed impressive pieces which clearly demonstrated a secure understanding of the style, the lyrics and mood of the song was not always appropriately connected to the Comic Relief fundraising event.

Many candidates had been encouraged to choose approaches and styles that reflected their own musical interests. This reflects well on the teaching. There were some superbly written pieces in the western classical style, as well as compositions where candidates had been allowed to stretch their creativity and imagination. There were many successful songs, performed and recorded by candidates, and some excellent jazz-inspired compositions, where candidates showed a secure understanding of stylistic conventions and handled harmonic and rhythmic elements with confidence. Overall, there were a tremendous variety of styles covered, including, computer game music, trance music, modern urban genres, as well as various types of dance music.

Some candidates chose to compose a second composition in the same style as their first piece and both compositions ended up very similar.

There were two main issues raised by the moderating team. The first was the situation that many submissions featured many incomplete or inadequate briefs of the candidate's own choosing which gave little sense of style, occasion or audience. A significant minority indicated no choice of brief at all. Future candidates must remember to check with the exact requirements of the specification so that their musical response can be suitably credited in AO2.1c. If there are no musical parameters provided, it is impossible to quantify to what extent the composition responds to the brief.

Secondly, despite previous guidance, there were more centres this year providing class-based composition projects that were highly tailored to a specific formula – even at times dictating which chords or rhythms to use and in which order, or which bar to include cadence points. This generally tends to restrict the candidate's ability to explore individual creative ideas. It is advisable that centres avoid over scaffolding to ensure that the pieces are not formulaic as the results lack individuality, as the candidates are not necessarily exploring their own musical interests or original thought processes. Some of these compositions were often very sophisticated and showed strong stylistic understanding, but the approach is not really in-keeping with the spirit of the task.

Administration

In many centres, the uploading procedures were well aligned with WJEC guidance, presenting supportive documentation which provided the relevant information needed to assess centre marks in line with the assessment criteria. However, the standards varied tremendously, and the following issues were reported by moderators.

- Incorrect labelling of documents where the guidance had not been followed, causing some difficulty in locating the work
- Insufficient and/or missing documentation and/or signatures
- Audio files incorrectly bounced resulting in missing tracks
- Clerical errors
- Component 1 uploaded instead of Component 2
- Inability to access some files which had been uploaded in incorrect formats and could not be accessed by all moderators
- Some work being uploaded as an unnecessarily large number of separate files, instead of being collated as required.
- Most requests for the correct replacement information from centres were dealt with efficiently, though there were some delays.
- Please be respectfully reminded that centres must follow the NEA upload guidance, with all files labelled as according to guidelines and uploaded in an accessible and organised format.

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Candidate Logs

These were variable in standard. The best were informative and detailed and of tremendous help to the moderator, though a large proportion were poorly done, completed incorrectly or not competed at all, only offering the authentication signatures. Many used their leadsheets and annotation as a substitute for the information required in the log. One centre created their own version of the log which is not what is required. A candidate log – completed by the candidate - while not assessed, is a firm requirement of this specification and all sections must be completed.

Countless learners failed to acknowledge loops, samples, or 'borrowed ideas' - but **non-original work must be declared.**

Many candidates did not explain how the recording was produced in a live performance of the pieces. 'Output from computer' was often ticked when there were clearly live performers.

Some candidates wrote about their composition process which is good to see how the work was shaped and developed, while others wrote commentaries and analysis of their work which is not necessary if the notation has been submitted. The process of composing and refining was rarely completed well, and too many candidates failed to correctly write the brief that they had chosen.

Scores/Leadsheets

Scores and leadsheets ranged from highly detailed to inadequate. The best, with excellent and informative detail and explanation communicated the musical material efficiently; more unhelpful submissions were either without scores or lacked sufficient musical details on the leadsheets e.g., just a few sentences, unannotated screenshots or lyrics and chords for songs, with no indication of melody, rhythm, texture or instrumentation. Some centres submitted DAW screenshots but failed to include the full screenshot and instead submitted a series of fragmented pictures of different instruments which may have been helpful in support of a full screenshot, but on their own were insufficient.

Some centres presented both western notation scores and annotated screenshots for all pieces - this is not necessary. Scores printed from DAWs are often one bar per page and dozens of empty bars and/or many instruments crammed onto one sheet are unhelpful and are almost impossible to follow. Some candidates combined scores or lead sheets within the candidate log forms; but they should be uploaded separately to support each composition and not included within the body of the log. Please remind candidates that if a score is not available, then 'a detailed written description of the music plus a lead sheet outlining the melody, chords, structure, and compositional devices' must be submitted.

If a candidate has not presented any supporting score or information to support the audio file, a note from the teacher in the comments section would help explain the situation and avoid the moderator having to contact the centre.

Use of technology

The range of available programmes is enormous, but it is essential that moderators and teachers are made aware of how they have been used, particularly in the way that more complex accompaniments can be created. The candidates' exact creative input in terms of using and controlling the musical elements must be identifiable and clear.

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Recordings

The majority of recordings submitted were exported MIDI from various software programmes, and the standard of was usually very high. Computer software was used in the vast majority of centres and audio files were extracted. Live recordings are always welcomed, though at times there were balance issues. Some audios still included the metronome which was a little distracting and often highlighted timing issues. There were occasional examples of digital interference or external background noise, and there were instances of audio files running significantly longer than the musical content, sometimes including a section of older ideas possibly from earlier drafts of ideas. There were a few centres who recorded the compositions onto a separate device from the computer, sometimes through a live microphone, above which staff conversations could be heard.

Please check all audio files carefully before uploading.

A FINAL REMINDER: Recordings of live performances – IMPORTANT.

One of the most contentious issues this year (and indeed previously) are the difficulties which arise when other performers are involved, performing parts where no notation is available and an accurate guide track has not been admitted**.** In some logs there was ambiguity regarding who had performed live parts and, more importantly, how musical material had been communicated to performers when scores were not provided. Increasingly, candidates who are unable to sustain a vocal line choose to compose songs and enlist the help of others to realise their ideas.

A high-quality audio version of a composition is fully welcomed when the musical notation has been presented as a score, thus enabling other musicians to contribute to a performance of the piece.

When the vocalist was not the candidate, the information was at times omitted on the log, though occasionally made clear elsewhere on in the lead sheets, and teacher support was acknowledged. Some candidates stated that guide tracks had been recorded as regards the melodic content, though in many cases these had not been uploaded as part of the original folio.

This is a matter of real concern to the moderator as without sufficient evidence, it is impossible to appreciate exactly what is the work of the candidate and what is due to the interpretive qualities and musical skills of the performer. When this occurred, there was, for the most part (though not always) insufficient evidence to support the composition as being that of the candidate's own work.

Likewise, no improvisations or any other ideas not created by the candidate and played by other performers can be credited to the learner. Teachers splaying piano accompaniments from chord symbols are still adding much more complex parts, e.g. suspensions and added chords, while some centres are also widely using drum machines/auto drum function/sample/auto chord accompaniments, none of which could be credited.

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Summary of key points

- The Assessment grid for Component 2: Composing, the Guidance for assessing Component 2, plus additional advice for composing within the areas of study can be found in Appendix B of the Music GCSE specification.
- Correct procedures for completion, NEA guidelines for uploading and expectations are available on the Eduqas website, and much advice has been given in previous Principal Moderator reports. This year, there has been no deviation from previous advice, therefore the reports from 2024 and 2025 would still be useful for centres.
- Continued engagement with exemplar materials and standardisation resources would be beneficial for centres to ensure correct administrative procedures are followed and achieve greater consistency when assessing the coursework.
- Keep the requirements of the GCSE Music Assessment Criteria for Composing at the forefront of all musical decisions made. Assess to the assessment criteria in the specification, not to the standards of the centre cohort.
- Check all recordings for balance/missing parts/interference/background noise and indicate in the Teacher Comment section in the candidate log if any material does not exist.
- When other performers have been involved in recording a candidate's composition, either the notation or a complete guide track performed by the candidate must be included. No credit can be awarded for the relevant ideas otherwise.
- All loops/autoplay/auto-accompaniments/auto chord patterns/arpeggiations and non-original content must be clearly credited by the candidate in the relevant section in the candidate log.

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MUSIC

GCSE

Summer 2026

COMPONENT 3 APPRAISING

Fourteen and a half thousand candidates sat the appraising examination this year. This produced consistencies with previous exam papers which are worthy of comment.

Once again, candidates appeared to be comfortable with the general format of the appraising examination, however some of the more problematic issues were as follows:

- Questions on the set works (*Badinerie* and *Africa*) were delivered for the fifth time this year. Whilst some parts of each question were able to be answered simply by listening to the extract and examining the score, the majority of the questions required learning to have taken place in advance. Unfortunately, it was frequently apparent to examiners that at times insufficient preparation had occurred and centres are encouraged to ensure that their candidates are as familiar with all aspects of the set works as possible. In particular, candidates need to be able to identify the theoretical aspects of both works and should be familiar with chords, cadences, compositional devices and modulations.
- Describing musical features and elements continued to cause problems for some candidates, although responses were generally improved from previous years. When asked to describe the constituent ingredients of a melody candidates should focus on pitch and rhythm and should **not** include any references to performance techniques of any kind. When describing the constituent ingredients of dynamics, texture, instrumentation, tonality and harmony they should be using the appropriate musical vocabulary associated with these specific musical elements. Unfortunately, many candidates failed to use relevant vocabulary or made references to other, unrelated, musical elements instead.
- The dictation question continued to cause problems for many candidates this year. A significant number failed to write the time signature in the correct place on the score and the majority failed to identify the key of F major. Many candidates found it difficult to complete the pitch of the melody and this musicianship skill continues to need further development.
- Candidates demonstrated a significant amount of musical awareness when comparing contrasting versions of the same piece of music or of different sections from within the same piece of music. However, some candidates found the organisation of their answer problematic and provided answers referring to the original version or section of the piece rather than the contrasting version or section on which the question was based.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Q1 SET WORK – *Section A from Badinerie* (Musical Forms and Devices)

(a.) Rather hit and miss, with only the second of the three answers being correctly identified. Many candidates forgot to include the sharps for the first and last answers.

(b.) This was mostly correct with the majority identifying bar 3.

(c.) Mostly correct.

(d.) (i) Almost entirely correct.
(ii) Mostly very well explained.

(e.) This caused significant problems for most candidates and the few that managed to identify the cadences were usually correct for both locations.

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(f.) This was answered fairly well, and many candidates achieved at least two marks. In terms of pitch, the most popular correct answers were sequence, ornaments and anacrusis. Very few candidates identified the part as being a simplified or alternative version of the melody and instead described it as being a countermelody or an accompaniment, both of which were incorrect. Many said that it was conjunct or disjunct and failed to identify the fact that it contained a combination of both. In terms of rhythm, many identified that the part consisted of mostly quavers and that it was on the beat. In terms of the performance techniques, many identified that it was performed arco and staccato. This question contained a clearly designated line for each answer, therefore only the first answer on each line could be credited and everything else was ignored. Fortunately, most candidates were, on the whole, careful to write only one answer on each line.

Q2 ***Morning from Peer Gynt*** **(Musical Forms and Devices)**

(a.) Almost entirely correct.

(b.) More of a mixed bag than the previous question and many thought that they could hear a clarinet.

(c.) Almost entirely correct.

(d.) This caused more issues than question 1f as candidates were required to describe the melody rather than the part and, as a result, had to restrict their responses to that of only pitch and rhythm. Many talked about tempo or dynamics and many mentioned the fact that it was played legato, none of which could be credited. The most popular correct answers were *major*, *diatonic*, *sequence*, *imitative* and *on the beat*.

(e.) Fairly well answered, although a significant number said 3/4.

(f.) Mostly correct.

(g.) Well answered and many secured two marks.

(h.) This was more problematic than the previous question and whilst many identified the major tonality they struggled to provide a second answer. Harmonic descriptions were almost impossible for the vast majority. Although two marks were allocated to questions (g) and (h), it was not stipulated that candidates had to restrict themselves to only two answers per question and this proved to be beneficial to the overall success rate.

Q3 ***The Sound of Music*** **(Music for Ensemble)**

(a.) (i) This was particularly problematic and all three accidentals appeared across the range of candidate answers. Unfortunately, if the natural was identified it wasn't always associated with the correct note.

(ii) Whilst the first and last notes were fairly reliable, the rest of the dictation was a moveable feast.

(iii) Rather hit and miss and many seemed to mix up rallentando with diminuendo.

(b.) (i) Mostly correctly identified, although some failed to place the time signature correctly on the score.

(ii) Very hit and miss.

(iii) Fairly well identified.

(iv) Fairly well identified.

(v) Fairly well identified.

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Q4 *Aquarium from Carnival of the Animals* (Music for Ensemble)

(a.) Fairly well identified.
(b.) Very hit and miss.
(c.) Fairly well identified.
(d.) Approximately half the candidates identified the correct form, despite being presented with the structure (Section A and Section B) at the beginning of the question. This was quite a disappointing outcome.
(e.) The majority scored at least one mark with *chromatic movement* being the most reliable correct answer.
(f.) Again, the majority scored at least one mark with *sequence* being the most reliable correct answer. For this, and for the previous question, two ticks were required. If a candidate provided three ticks, then one correct answer was removed.
(g.) This was well answered with most candidates identifying the use of *vocals* as their first or second response. The other most popular answers were *introduction*, *monophonic*, *no flute*, *a cappella*, *lyrics*, *faster*, *louder* and *longer*. As with questions 1f and 2d, this question contained a clearly designated line for each answer, therefore only the first answer on each line could be credited and everything else was ignored. Fortunately, most candidates were, on the whole, careful to write only one answer on each line. A word of caution though is that candidates were required to restrict their comments to the version stated in the question; in this case version 2. Those who provided answers explaining the ways in which version 1 was different were not awarded any marks.

Q5 *The Magnificent Seven* (Film Music)

(a.) Whilst many identified the constant speed, a significant number felt that it got faster.
(b.) Very hit and miss.
(c.) This was effectively answered and many candidates achieved full marks. Students are well-versed in answering this question and the most successful answers discussed the use of structural devices, instrumental techniques, textural devices, dynamic effects, the use of tonality and harmony, melodic features, rhythmic features and compositional devices and linked them to the action in a number of interesting and creative ways. Once again this year, there were significantly fewer candidates who simply offered a list of musical features without any links to the purpose and intention of the music. Similarly, there were fewer candidates who kept repeating the words action, excitement and heroism as the links at the end of each statement.

Q6 *9 to 5* (Film Music)

(a.) Well identified.
(b.) Fairly well identified.
(c.) Surprisingly, this caused issues for a significant number of candidates.
(d.) (i) As with all questions relating to harmony, this was very hit and miss.
(ii) Whilst this was also very hit and miss, the first and last chords seemed to be the most reliable.
(e.) As with question 4g, this was well answered and many achieved three or four marks. The most popular correct answers were *backing vocals*, *lyrics*, *brass*, *drum kit*, *thicker texture* and *louder*. Unfortunately, some candidates chose to talk about the verse rather than the chorus and were therefore not able to be awarded any marks.

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Q7 SET WORK - *Verse Two from Africa* (Popular Music)

(a.) Whilst many candidates identified the verse, they failed to say which verse it was.
(b.) Well identified.
(c.) Very hit and miss.
(d.) Very poorly answered.
(e.) Well answered on the whole and many achieved two or three marks. The most popular correct answers were *conjunct*, *descending*, *diatonic*, *semibreves* and *legato*.
(f.) Many candidates failed to identify the locations or failed to provide adequate descriptions and, as a result, many scored zero marks for this question. Familiarity with the set work was crucial to the success of question seven as a whole and this was immediately apparent when marking candidate responses.

Q8 *Vogue* (Popular Music)

(a.) Mostly correct.
(b.) Approximately half of all candidates identified the tonic and the dominant.
(c.) Well answered on the whole.
(d.) The vast majority were correct.
(e.) (i) Almost entirely correct.
(ii) Not quite as well identified as the previous question, but still very good.
(f.) Mostly correct.
(g.) A real mixed bag of answers.
(h.) (i) Well identified.
(ii) Well described, with *chords*, *syncopated* and *staccato* being the most reliable responses.
(i.) Fairly well answered.

Summary of key points

- It is imperative that candidates are as familiar as possible with the set works.
- Candidates should be familiar with each of the musical elements and should be able to utilise appropriate musical vocabulary when describing them.
- On the exam paper, where a specific number of answers are required – for example, two – only the first two answers will be considered.
- Candidates must not write more than one answer on a single line as only the first answer will be credited.
- Where no specific number of answers are requested, candidates are invited to describe as many musical features as possible, and examiners will credit all correct observations.
- Negative answers will not be credited, and a candidate who describes what is <u>not</u> present in a piece of music will not receive any marks. However, this will not be the case when candidates are required to compare two pieces of music or two contrasting sections from the same piece of music.
- Tick box answers should not exceed the number of ticks stated in the question.
- With regards to the longer answer question, candidates are advised to discuss a range of musical elements ensuring that they are linked to the purpose and intention of the music.
- For the completion of the dictation question, candidates are advised to write in pencil so that any amendments to the score can be made as easily and as clearly as possible.

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