



External Assessment Report 2012

Subject	Music
Level	Intermediate 1 and 2

The statistics used in this report are pre-appeal.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers/lecturers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published question papers and marking instructions for the examination.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

In both Intermediate 1 and 2 Music the majority of candidates continue to be presented for the Music with Performing option.

In 2012, overall candidate performance at Intermediate 1 level was consistent with that of 2011. Question Paper performance increased by three marks on average. This increase was consistent across candidates who opted for the Performing Course model as well as those who undertook the Performing with Technology option.

At Intermediate 2 level a remarkable level of consistency was again evident. The A–C pass rate remained at 93%, in line with that of the last four years. The year-on-year consistency of attainment in the Performing component reflects not only judicious presentation by centres, but rigorous preparation of candidates.

The Question Papers at both Intermediate 1 and 2 seem to hold no surprises for candidates, which suggests that centres are making full use of the past papers and Marking Instructions on SQA's website. This was reinforced by the fact that SQA's Examiners and Markers encountered few cases of candidates supplying extra answers, providing too many answers, ticking too many boxes, etc. This also serves to underline rigorous preparation by centres.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Candidates performed well in all areas, ie they were prepared for the level at which they were being presented and generally gave a good account of themselves in that context.

The familiarity with the Question Paper format, layout and demands is testament to solid preparation and sound performance in this component.

In the Performing component, candidates were generally well prepared for the experience, including the sampling of Performing.

In MIDI Sequencing and Sound Engineering the folios submitted for central marking illustrated a clear awareness of the demands at these levels, with most candidates able to meet the requirements of this component.

Areas which candidates found demanding

At both Intermediate 1 and 2 levels, questions 5 and 6 in the Question Paper proved to be challenging for most candidates, although an improvement was evident in question 6 at both levels.

The traditional notation questions at both levels provided a great diversity of responses, with some candidates (who may have been fluent in this medium) gaining very good marks, while other candidates were clearly struggling in this area of the syllabus.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Referrals to Principal Assessor continue to reflect Performing programmes that are significantly short of time. Visiting Assessors will sample three minutes of music, but centres are still required to prepare candidates for a performance lasting at least four minutes.

In the Performing with Technology folios submitted to SQA for marking, the recording quality of a number of CDs of Performing fell well short of the standard that might be expected from centres specialising in Sound Engineering and MIDI. Centres must also make clear to the Marker which line of music or part is being performed by the candidate. This is particularly important when two instruments of a similar timbre are performing.

It is recognised that many candidates do not learn within the context of traditional music notation, eg chordal guitar, drum kit, bass guitar TAB etc. The Question Paper assigns six marks to questions assessing a basic knowledge of music notation, and some centres would be well advised to provide candidates with a more thorough preparation to allow them to attempt these questions.

Candidates at both levels, however, seemed to be well prepared generally, and centres are advised to continue to prepare candidates strictly in line with SQA's regulations to ensure candidates maximise their potential.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Intermediate 1

Number of resulted entries in 2011	825
------------------------------------	-----

Number of resulted entries in 2012	740
------------------------------------	-----

Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark 100				
A	30.3%	30.3%	224	70
B	31.9%	62.2%	236	60
C	19.9%	82.0%	147	50
D	6.8%	88.8%	50	45
No award	11.2%	100.0%	83	-

Statistical information: update on Courses

Intermediate 2

Number of resulted entries in 2011	3663
------------------------------------	------

Number of resulted entries in 2012	3966
------------------------------------	------

Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark 100				
A	51.7%	51.7%	2050	69
B	27.4%	79.1%	1088	59
C	14.2%	93.3%	563	49
D	2.6%	95.9%	104	44
No award	4.1%	100.0%	161	-

General commentary on grade boundaries

- ◆ While SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which will allow a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary) and a well prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional A boundary), it is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level.
- ◆ Each year SQA therefore holds a grade boundary meeting for each subject at each level where it brings together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). The Principal Assessor and SQA Qualifications Manager meet with the relevant SQA Business Manager and Statistician to discuss the evidence and make decisions. The meetings are chaired by members of the management team at SQA.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the exam is more challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.
- ◆ An exam paper at a particular level in a subject in one year tends to have a marginally different set of grade boundaries from exam papers in that subject at that level in other years. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. If SQA has already altered a boundary in a particular year in, say, Higher Chemistry this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter boundaries in their prelim exam in Higher Chemistry. The two are not that closely related as they do not contain identical questions.
- ◆ SQA's main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.