



Course Report 2014

Subject	Music
Level	National 5

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any Post Results Services.

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 assessment and marking instructions for the examination.

Section 1: Comments on the Assessment

Component 1: Performance

The grades for the Performance Component of the National 5 Music Course show that most candidates were very well prepared and demonstrated good levels of ability on both instruments, with many playing above the minimum standard required.

Almost 7000 candidates were assessed by Visiting Assessors, and the feedback indicates that centres clearly understood the requirements for the Performing Assessment. Candidates have flexibility in this new qualification to adapt timings for their two instruments to create an 8 minute programme, and this was implemented very well.

The new option to record the Performance Assessment was welcomed by many centres, and candidates did not seem to be unsettled by this.

Component 2: Question paper

In the question paper there was clear evidence that candidates had been well prepared by centres. The question paper assessed knowledge and understanding of a range of National 3, National 4 and National 5 course concepts, with many candidates demonstrating they had developed good aural skills to identify features in the music.

The music excerpts in the question paper received many favourable comments in the feedback received from centres.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Component 1: Performance

Most candidates were well prepared for the Performance assessment and demonstrated good ability on their instruments/voice. There was evidence to suggest they had rehearsed with their accompanist or backing tracks as part of their preparation, and many performed with a high degree of accuracy.

Almost all centres ensured that candidates had the correct timings for their programmes, and that a minimum of two pieces were performed on each instrument/voice.

In some cases, centres had not fully adhered to SQA guidelines when preparing candidate programmes, for example by not using the new Drumkit Style Bank, or presenting less than 12 chords in a chordal guitar programme.

Component 2: Question paper

Most candidates demonstrated good preparation for the question paper, showing knowledge of Course concepts and an understanding of music literacy. A wide variety of question types

and musical excerpts were used to assess aural discriminatory ability as well as knowledge and understanding, and most candidates coped very well with the level of demand in the paper.

Questions requiring a single concept to be identified, for example an instrument or type of voice, proved difficult for some candidates. Some questions required answers to be written as Italian terms rather than the English equivalent. However, these also posed difficulty for some candidates.

Section 3: Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: Performance

Excellent standards of performing were evident in many centres and across a wide range of instruments and voices. Music Teachers and Instrumental Staff have worked well with candidates to produce programmes of music which meet the minimum Grade 3 performance standards within the 8 minute timing.

Many candidates played with confidence on both of their instruments and maintained good tempo and flow throughout their music.

Component 2: Question Paper

The Question Paper on the whole was well done, with candidates demonstrating particularly strong performance in the following areas:

- ◆ Multiple choice questions throughout the paper.
- ◆ Question 3: This question was well done by most candidates with many correctly inserting the key signature in 3(a) and the missing notes in 3(c).
- ◆ Question 7(b)(i): Many candidates correctly identified that the style was Minimalist.
- ◆ Question 8: Candidates were able to identify prominent features in the music and to give a range of answers in at least three of the categories: Rhythm/tempo; Melody/harmony; Instruments/voices; Dynamics.

Section 4: Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: Performance

In vocal programmes, some candidates performed songs that were above the standard required and were clearly too difficult for them. Centres should carefully guide candidates to perform music that is appropriate to their level of ability.

Some candidates presented short programmes or only performed one piece on each instrument instead of the minimum two pieces required for each instrumental or vocal performance.

It appears that some centres were unaware of the new Drumkit Style Bank, which is a requirement for the new qualifications. The Drumkit Style Bank was updated in June 2014 and can be found here:

http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/DrumkitStyleBankUpdateJune2014.pdf

Component 2: Question Paper

Some questions in the paper were poorly done by some candidates:

- ◆ Question 1(e) – identifying oboe as the solo instrument.
- ◆ Question 2(4) – using the correct Italian tempo marking.
- ◆ Question 3(d) – ensuring the lines and dots were inserted in the correct places for the repeat mark.
- ◆ Question 4(d) – identifying baritone as the solo voice.
- ◆ Question 7(a)(ii) and (b)(ii) – giving a reason to support the answer chosen in part (i) of each of these questions. Giving the answer of ‘piano’ is not sufficient to demonstrate that the candidate fully understands what a concerto is.

Section 5: Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Component 1: Performance

Centres should ensure that the total programme length for candidates is between 8 and 8 ½ minutes, and a minimum of two pieces should be performed on each instrument/voice.

The Drumkit Style Bank should be referred to when deciding the content of Drumkit programmes.

Grade 3 is the minimum standard required on both instruments. Music that has been approved in the past by SQA should be used as a benchmark when deciding the level of new resources.

Candidates playing chordal guitar should accompany a melody line. This may be sung, played on another instrument or be a pre-recorded track. At this level, a chordal guitar programme should demonstrate barré chords and a variety of arpeggiated accompanying styles.

Component 2: Question paper

Centres could help their candidates prepare for the question paper by recommending a variety of resources to help them identify the instruments and voices that are detailed in the National 3, National 4 and National 5 concept lists.

In Question 3 it is important that candidates know where to correctly place their answers. For example, the time signature should be written clearly on the staff, after the key signature and before the first note.

In Question 7 candidates should ensure that their response clearly demonstrates their knowledge when giving their reasons for the chosen answer.

In Question 8 instruments should be singular or plural as appropriate to the excerpt, and Italian terms should be used, for example when commenting on tempo or dynamics.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2013	0
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Number of resulted entries in 2014	6945
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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	64.8%	64.8%	4503	71
B	20.1%	84.9%	1394	61
C	9.6%	94.5%	664	51
D	2.3%	96.7%	158	46
No award	3.3%	-	226	-