



Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board



**Cambridge Assessment
International Education**

**Singapore–Cambridge General Certificate of Education
Ordinary Level (2026)**

Higher Music (Syllabus 6086)

This syllabus has been reviewed and revised.

| Significant changes to the syllabus are indicated by black vertical lines on either side of the text. **|**

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INTRODUCTION

The syllabus is designed to engage candidates in the musical activities of Listening, Creating and Performing (in an integrated manner) while providing opportunities for candidates to follow their own musical inclinations through creating and performing music of their own choice. It is also underpinned by the understanding that an appreciation of the cultural diversity of music is vital in developing open-mindedness towards the multiplicity of musical practices. Through the syllabus, candidates have the opportunities to explore a wide range of genres and styles to broaden and develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of music. It provides the platform for candidates to make music, both individually and in groups. The syllabus lays the foundation for further study in music and endeavours to foster a lifelong appreciation of and involvement in music. The Higher Music syllabus also includes an Elective Paper for candidates to develop an area of interest and strength at a deeper level.

AIMS

The aims of the syllabus are to:

- Develop critical thinking and musical creativity
- Develop communication, collaborative and interpretative skills in music
- Develop perception and awareness of musical cultures and traditions, both local and global
- Develop independent learners with inquiring and innovative minds through reflective practices in music
- Provide the basis for an informed and lifelong appreciation of music

The aims of the Elective are to:

- Extend the range of skills required to communicate musical ideas and understanding
- Develop a deepened understanding and appreciation of musical cultures
- Encourage independent musical exploration

FRAMEWORK

The syllabus is organised into three papers: Music Studies, Creating and Performing. Music Studies is organised by Areas of Study, which covers a wide range of musical styles and traditions to guide aural exploration through listening, analysis, creating and performing. Creating and Performing provide the necessary breadth of musical and reflective skills, equipping candidates with their articulation of their musical understanding, intentions and evaluation of their musical choices in their compositions and performances.

Higher Music candidates offer the Elective Paper together with Music at O-Level. For the Elective Paper, candidates will choose one of the following areas:

- Research Essay
- Creating
- Performing

REQUIREMENTS

Candidates offering this syllabus must take papers **6086/1**, **6086/2** and **6086/3**, and one Elective Paper – **6086/12**, **6086/22** or **6086/32** – of the candidate's choice.

Candidates offering this syllabus must be under the direct supervision of an O-Level Music teacher in their own school or any of the approved O-Level Music Centres.

AREAS OF STUDY

The Areas of Study represent a broad selection of significant genres and traditions for musical study at O-Level. Each Area of Study is situated within specific musical traditions. Candidates will understand and appreciate the historical, social and cultural contexts of music from the following four Areas of Study:

- 1 Western Classical Tradition
- 2 Jazz
- 3 Popular Music
- 4 Asian Music

Western Classical Tradition		
Candidates will be examined on the following:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solo Instrumental Music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Baroque Dance Suite – Classical Sonata – Romantic Character Piece – 20th Century Musical Styles (Impressionism and Nationalism) • Chamber Music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Classical String Quartet – Romantic German Lieder (for solo voice and piano) • Symphony (from the Classical period) 		
Knowledge Outcomes	Skills Outcomes	Musical Elements and Concepts
<p>Candidates should be able to demonstrate understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the historical, social and cultural contexts of music in each period • the purpose for which these musics are created • the musical practice in each case 	<p>Candidates will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distinguish between the music of the different periods by examining the musical characteristics of the select genres and traditions, focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Rhythm and Metre – Melody – Harmony and Tonality – Texture – Timbre, Instrumentation and Orchestration (including voice) – Instruments of the Western Orchestra (including keyboard) – Form and Structure – Relationship between words and music – Relationship between the voice(s)/ instrument(s) 	<p>Rhythm and Metre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pulse, Tempo, Simple and Compound time, Changing metres, Syncopation, Hemiola, Ostinato <p>Melody</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contour, Motif, Theme, Decoration (ornaments), Voice-leading, Repetition, Sequence, Variation <p>Harmony and Tonality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consonance and Dissonance, Scales, Modes, Intervals, Chord types and Inversions, Cadences, Tonality, Keys and Modulations, Standard chord progressions, Pedal, Drone, Harmonic rhythm

Knowledge Outcomes	Skills Outcomes	Musical Elements and Concepts
		<p>Texture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monophony/Unison, Homophony, Polyphony, Doubling <p>Timbre, Instrumentation and Orchestration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Properties of instruments/voices, instrumental/vocal techniques and performance practices <p>Form and Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Binary, Ternary, Minuet and Trio, Scherzo, Rondo, Theme and Variations, Sonata form, Strophic, Through-composed

Jazz

Candidates will be examined on the following between the 1920s and 1960s in America:

- Traditional Jazz
- Swing
- Bebop
- Cool Jazz

Knowledge Outcomes	Skills Outcomes	Musical Elements and Concepts
<p>Candidates should be able to demonstrate understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the historical, social and cultural contexts of Jazz • the musical practices of the Jazz tradition • the role of and approaches to improvisation in Jazz • the approaches to arrangement in Jazz (e.g. the roles of instruments and instrumental sections, techniques of instrumentation on textural outcomes) 	<p>Candidates will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distinguish musical characteristics, conventions and features of the select genres, focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Rhythm and Metre – Melody – Harmony and Tonality – Texture – Timbre, Instrumentation and Orchestration (including common instrumental combinations and instrumental performance techniques) – Form and Structure 	<p>Rhythm and Metre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swing rhythm, Backbeat, Syncopation, Groove, Stop time <p>Melody</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue notes • Devices (Repetition, Sequence, Variation, Call-and-response, Fill, Arpeggio, Riff, Vamp) <p>Harmony and Tonality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keys and Modulations • Blues scale • Standard chord progressions (II-V-I, I-VI-II-V), Tonal and Modal cadences • Chords (Dominant 7th, Major 7th, Minor 7th, Added 6th, Diminished, Root position and Inversions, Rootless voicing) • Harmonic rhythm • Chord symbol, Slash chord notation • Devices (Pedal point, Vamp, Turnaround) <p>Texture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polyphony/Contrapuntal, Homophony, Unison, Block chords

Knowledge Outcomes	Skills Outcomes	Musical Elements and Concepts
		<p>Timbre, Instrumentation and Orchestration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key instruments and sections (e.g. rhythm section, horn section, front-line instruments) of the standard Jazz combos and big bands • Role of instruments and instrumental sections • Instrumental techniques (Slide/Glissando/Pitch-bend, Vibrato, Use of mutes) • Performance practices (Walking bass, Comping, Scat, Collective or Solo improvisation, Trading solos, Break, Accent, Articulation, Imitation) <p>Form and Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32-bar AABA form • 32-bar ABAC form • 12-bar blues form • Head, Chorus, Bridge, Interlude

Popular Music

Candidates will be examined on the following from the late 1960s to the present:

- Late 1960s Pop-Rock
- Synth-Pop
- R&B/Soul

Knowledge Outcomes	Skills Outcomes	Musical Elements and Concepts
<p>Candidates should be able to demonstrate understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the historical, social and cultural contexts of popular music • the musical practices of Popular Music • the use and impact of technology in music production, recording and reproduction (e.g. the manipulation of sounds; timbres of electric instruments, computer-generated sounds and acoustic instruments) 	<p>Candidates will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distinguish musical characteristics, conventions and features of the select genres, focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Rhythm and Metre – Melody – Harmony and Tonality – Texture – Timbre and Instrumentation – Vocal and instrumental techniques – Form and Structure – Relationship between lyrics and music – Relationship between the voice(s)/instrument(s)/technology • identify and/or describe conventions of music technology in sound manipulation, production and recording (e.g. over-dubbing, multi-tracking, looping) 	<p>Rhythm and Metre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syncopation, Ostinato, Groove, Riff <p>Melody</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contour, Phrase, Motif, Variation, Riff, Fill, Hook, Lick <p>Harmony and Tonality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scales and Modes, Chords, Tonality, Cadences, Keys and Modulations, Standard chord progressions <p>Texture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homophony, Polyphony, Unison <p>Timbre and Instrumentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acoustic and electric instruments, Synthesised/ Computer-generated sound, Digital effects (FX): Reverb, Distortion, Delay, Panning, Fade in/out • Vocal and instrumental techniques <p>Form and Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verse and Chorus, Intro, Outro, Bridge, Break, Solo, Instrumental interlude, Pop ballad

Asian Music

Candidates will be examined on the following:

- Music of Malay Traditional Dances (*Zapin* and *Joget*)
- Chinese Ensemble Music (*Jiangnan Sizhu* and *Guangdong Music*)
- Indian Ensemble Music (*Carnatic* and *Hindustani*)
- Gamelan (*Javanese*)

Knowledge Outcomes	Skills Outcomes	Musical Elements and Concepts
<p>Candidates should be able to demonstrate understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the social and cultural contexts of music in each tradition • the purpose for which the music is created • approaches to improvisation and arrangement within the context of the various genres/traditions • the roles of instruments (e.g. bass, harmony instruments, rhythm section, percussion) • instrumental/performance techniques unique to the various genres/traditions 	<p>Candidates will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distinguish between the music of the different traditions by examining the musical characteristics of the select genres and traditions, focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Rhythm and Metre – Melody – Texture – Timbre and Instrumentation – Common instruments used (including combination of instruments) – Form and Structure • differentiate between the genres specified in each tradition (where applicable) 	<p>Malay Traditional Dances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruments: <i>gambus</i>, violin, <i>seruling</i>, accordion, <i>rebana</i>, <i>marwas</i> and gong • Typical rhythmic patterns associated with each dance genre • Functions and features of <i>taksim</i> and <i>wainap</i> <p>Chinese Ensemble Music</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruments: <i>erhu</i>, <i>gaohu</i>, <i>guzheng</i>, <i>yangqin</i>, <i>pipa</i>, <i>sanxian</i>, <i>dizi</i>, <i>xiao</i>, <i>sheng</i>, clappers, cymbals and drums • Tempo/Form: <i>manban</i>, <i>zhongban</i>, <i>kuaiban</i> • Mode: Pentatonic <p>Indian Ensemble Music</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruments: <i>sitar</i>, <i>veena</i>, violin, <i>sarod</i>, <i>sarangi</i>, <i>tabla</i>, <i>mridangam</i> and <i>tambura</i> • Improvisation according to <i>raga</i> and <i>tala</i> • Form/Structure: <i>alap/alapana</i>, <i>gat</i>, <i>kriti</i> <p>Gamelan (Javanese)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruments: metallophones, gongs, gong-chimes, <i>rebab</i>, <i>suling</i> and <i>kendang</i> • Tuning systems: <i>pelog</i>, <i>slendro</i> • Texture: polyphonic stratification, heterophony

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

The assessment objectives for this syllabus are presented below.

AO1 Demonstrate Musical Understanding and Knowledge

Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- Musical elements, concepts and knowledge; and
- Musical processes and skills

AO2 Interpret and Communicate Musical Ideas

Students should be able to apply musical knowledge and understanding to:

- Interpret music in a variety of contexts
- Explain how musical knowledge is understood in particular contexts
- Communicate musical ideas and expressions through a variety of modes; and
- Collaborate with others to present effective ensemble performances

AO3 Analyse and Evaluate Music

Students should be able to analyse and evaluate music, using appropriate music terminology, to:

- Analyse music of a wide range of genres, styles and traditions, including unfamiliar works by other composers/performers
- Make judgement about their own musical works and performances based on stylistic understandings and relevant creating and performing conventions
- Reflect and make recommendations and decisions during the creating and performing process
- Plan and implement an investigation/inquiry into an area of music using research techniques and tools; and
- Communicate and present research findings clearly

The examination will reward candidates for positive achievement in:

Paper 1: Music Studies

- Identify, explain and/or describe musical concepts, instruments and stylistic characteristics in the context of the genres, traditions and styles
- Distinguish between the music of the different traditions and provide justification by examining the musical characteristics of the select genres and traditions
- Complete short musical dictation and read staff/lead sheet notation in the context of Western Classical, Jazz and Popular Music

Paper 2: Creating

- Demonstrate an understanding of the capabilities of the chosen voice, instrument(s) and/or electronic medium
- Demonstrate inventiveness of their musical idea(s) in communicating the intent of the work for a proposed context
- Demonstrate coherence of musical composition in terms of structure and style
- Demonstrate communication of aural imagination and compositional intentions
- Document and reflect on the compositional process

Paper 3: Performing

- Demonstrate technical competence and interpretative understanding through performing in solo and/or ensemble settings
- Communicate musical understanding and expression with a sense of purpose and audience
- Reflect on possible strategies and musical decisions candidates make during rehearsals to overcome creative and/or technical challenges in solo and/or ensemble settings

Paper 12: Research Essay

- Demonstrate an ability to use appropriate investigative techniques to communicate and present research findings clearly
- Substantiate judgements and generalisations by making reference to specific examples in the music studied

Paper 22: Higher Creating

- Demonstrate inventiveness of musical idea(s) in communicating the intent(s) of works for different contexts, including the use of technology in at least one work
- Articulate the compositional concepts and approaches in the writing of programme notes

Paper 32: Higher Performing

- Demonstrate technical competence and interpretative understanding through performing in ensemble and/or solo settings
- Articulate verbally their understanding of music and approach to rehearsing and performing it

SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT

The following table provides a summary of the weighting and assessment of the examination.

All Higher Music candidates are required to take all the compulsory papers listed in the table below:

Paper	Title	Weighting	Assessment Format	Duration	Marks
1	Music Studies	40%	Written Examination	1 hour 30 minutes	75
2	Creating	30%	(i) Composition	9 weeks, 5 hours of supervision time	40
			(ii) Reflection Notes		10
3	Performing	30%	(i) Recital	5–10 minutes	40
			(ii) Reflection Notes	–	10

AND

Choose one from Papers 12, 22 and 32 for the Elective:

Paper	Title	Weighting	Assessment Format	Duration	Marks
12	Research Essay	100%	Coursework	N.A.	50
22	Higher Creating	100%	(i) Coursework	N.A.	40
			(ii) Programme Notes		10
32	Higher Performing	100%	(i) Recital	8–12 minutes	40
			(ii) <i>Viva Voce</i>	3–5 minutes	10

Rules of Higher Music Award

Candidates offering Higher Music will receive an O-Level grade based on their overall performance in Papers 1, 2 and 3. In addition, they will also receive an award for Higher Music based on the following conditions:

- A candidate must achieve grade A1 or A2 for Papers 1, 2 and 3 combined and grade A1 or A2 in the Elective paper to be awarded **Distinction** in Higher Music.
- A candidate must achieve grade C6 or higher for Papers 1, 2 and 3 combined and grade C6 or higher in the Elective paper to be awarded **Merit** in Higher Music.

DESCRIPTION OF PAPERS AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

PAPER 1

Weighting

Assessment Format

MUSIC STUDIES

40%

Written Examination (1 hour 30 minutes) (75 marks)

Paper 1 has three parts containing six unprepared listening questions, all of which are compulsory:

	Areas of Study	No. of Questions	Marks
Part 1	Western Classical Tradition	2	25
Part 2	Jazz	1	25
	Popular Music	1	
Part 3	Asian Music	2	25

All questions will test candidates' aural perception skills, knowledge and understanding of the range of music stipulated in the syllabus. This will be done through unprepared recorded extracts. The question types include multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions, brief explanations or descriptions, and melody and/or rhythm dictation tasks. A maximum of two questions on melodic and/or rhythmic dictation will be set in Parts 1 and 2. Candidates are expected to use accurate technical vocabulary in all their answers.

Candidates must be able to follow the music extracts with the help of a skeleton score in Question 1, a full or skeleton score in Question 2, a skeleton score or lead sheet in Question 3 and a skeleton score or lead sheet in Question 4. A question on simple melodic and/or rhythmic dictation will be set for either Question 1 or 2. The extracts for Questions 5 and 6 will not be accompanied by any score. The duration of each extract will be between 30 seconds and 1 minute 30 seconds. There will be timed pauses between each playing of the recorded extracts to allow candidates time to write down their answers.

Part 1: Western Classical Tradition (25 marks)

Question 1 will carry 10 marks and Question 2 will carry 15 marks.

Questions 1 and 2 will be set on any of the following Western Classical Tradition genres listed below:

- (i) Solo Instrumental Music
 - (a) Baroque Dance Suite
 - (b) Classical Sonata
 - (c) Romantic Character Piece
 - (d) 20th Century Musical Styles (Impressionism and Nationalism)
- (ii) Chamber Music
 - (a) Classical String Quartet
 - (b) Romantic German Lieder (for solo voice and piano)
- (iii) Symphony (from the Classical period)

Extract 1 will be played four times, accompanied by a skeleton score.

Question 1 will assess knowledge on:

- the identification, explanation and/or description of the following elements and concepts in music:
 - Rhythm, metre and tempo
 - Harmony and tonality
 - Timbre, instrumentation and orchestration
 - Period and style
 - Relationship between (i) words and music, and (ii) voice(s)/instrument(s)
 - Melody
 - Texture
 - Form and structure
 - Genres
- simple melodic and/or rhythmic dictation of a prominent instrumental or vocal part

Extract 2 will be played four times, accompanied by a full or skeleton score.

Question 2 will assess knowledge on:

- the identification, explanation and/or description of the following elements and concepts in music:

– Rhythm, metre and tempo	– Melody
– Harmony and tonality	– Texture
– Timbre, instrumentation and orchestration	– Form and structure
– Period and style	– Genres
– Relationship between (i) words and music, and (ii) voice(s)/instrument(s)	
- detailed observations and higher level aural perception of stylistic and compositional features made in the context of the genre, period, and/or style
- simple melodic and/or rhythmic dictation of a prominent instrumental or vocal part

Part 2: Jazz and Popular Music (25 marks)

Questions 3 and 4 will each carry either 12 or 13 marks.

Question 3 will be set on any of the following Jazz styles from 1920s to 1960s in America listed below:

- (i) Traditional Jazz
- (ii) Swing
- (iii) Bebop
- (iv) Cool Jazz

Extract 3 will be played four times, accompanied by a skeleton score or a lead sheet and lyrics.

Question 3 will assess knowledge on:

- the identification, explanation and/or description of the following elements and concepts in music:

– Rhythm, metre and tempo	– Melody
– Harmony* and tonality	– Texture
– Timbre, instrumentation and orchestration	– Form and structure
– Style	
- simple melodic and/or rhythmic dictation of a prominent instrumental or vocal part
- stylistic and compositional features

**Candidates are not required to aurally identify chords, but should be able to explain and describe different chord types. Candidates are still expected to identify, explain and describe keys and cadences, modulations and harmonic devices.*

Question 4 will be set on any of the following Popular Music genres listed below:

- (i) Late 1960s Pop-rock
- (ii) Synth-Pop
- (iii) R&B and Soul

Extract 4 will be played four times, accompanied by a skeleton score or a lead sheet and lyrics.

Question 4 will assess knowledge on:

- the identification, explanation and/or description of the following elements and concepts in music:

– Rhythm, metre and tempo	– Melody
– Harmony [^] and tonality	– Texture
– Timbre and instrumentation	– Form and structure
– Relationship between (i) lyrics and music, and (ii) voice(s)/instrument(s)/technology [#]	– Genres
- simple melodic and/or rhythmic dictation of a prominent instrumental or vocal part
- stylistic and compositional features

[^]*Candidates are only required to aurally identify common chord progressions. They are also expected to explain and describe different chord types, as well as identify, explain and describe keys and cadences, modulations and harmonic devices.*

[#]*Candidates are required to aurally identify, describe and explain the following digital effects (FX): reverb, distortion, delay, panning and fade in/out. Candidates are also required to describe and explain the following sound manipulation processes and techniques: over-dubbing, multi-tracking and looping.*

Part 3: Asian Music (25 marks)

Questions 5 and 6 will each carry 12 or 13 marks.

Questions 5 and 6 will be set on any of the following Asian Music traditions listed below:

- (i) Music of Traditional Malay Dances (*Zapin* and *Joget*)
- (ii) Chinese Ensemble Music (*Jiangnan Sizhu* and *Guangdong Music*)
- (iii) Indian Ensemble Music (*Hindustani* and *Carnatic*)
- (iv) Gamelan (*Javanese*)

Extracts 5 and 6 will not be accompanied by a score. Each extract will be played four times.

Questions 5 and 6 will assess knowledge on:

- the identification, explanation and/or description of the following elements and concepts in music:

– Rhythm, metre and tempo	– Melody
– Texture	– Timbre and instrumentation
– Form and structure	– Genres
- stylistic and compositional features, and performance practice in the context of the tradition

PAPER 2**CREATING**

Weighting:

30%

Assessment Format:

Composition and Reflection Notes (50 marks)

Paper 2 has two parts: Part 1 (Composition) and Part 2 (Reflection Notes).

Part 1: Composition (40 marks)

This part will assess candidates' creative response to a stimulus, and technical competence in composing.

Candidates must submit one composition in response to one of the six stimuli outlined below.

The composition should be a complete piece, written for between one and five instruments (including voice(s))* , with a maximum performance duration of 3 minutes.

*The restriction in the number of instruments/voices only applies to compositions written for acoustic, electronic and electric instruments, and voices. There is no limit to the number of MIDI instruments and samples used in compositions created using DAW and Audio Editors.

In addition, candidates must also submit a set of Reflection Notes of 400–500 words, which explicates their decision-making processes during the period of composition to demonstrate their compositional thinking and understanding.

Candidates may use any style, technique or tradition listed in the Areas of Study, or beyond, and compose for any instrument(s) and/or voice(s).

The composition must be notated using staff notation or any other conventional form of notation (e.g. cipher notation, lead sheet) that are appropriate to the style of the music. If an alternative form of notation is used (e.g. graphic score), candidates must ensure that it clearly communicates their compositional intentions. Such scores should be accompanied by performance notes that explain the system of notation. Scores may be either handwritten or computer-generated, but they must be accurately edited.

Candidates who submit a lead sheet or who submit a composition that uses music technology (see options b and d in the table below) must also submit a written commentary.

Score submissions may not be necessary for compositions that use music technology. For compositions that fall into this category (e.g. electroacoustic composition), the audio recording submitted will be assessed in place of a score. Any borrowed materials, sources of pre-set loops, and/or pre-recorded samples must be clearly acknowledged in the Reflection Notes and in the Coursework Submission Form provided by SEAB, and also exported as individual audio files for verification purposes by Cambridge Assessment International Education.¹

The table below illustrates all the possible options for the submission of the Creating component:

	As substantive document [compulsory and assessed]	For illustrative purposes [compulsory but not assessed]
a	Staff notation	Audio recording (WAV format / MP3 format no lower than 320kbps)
b	Lead sheet <u>and</u> written commentary (including staff notation of grooves, etc.)	Audio recording (WAV format / MP3 format no lower than 320kbps)
c	Graphic notation <u>and</u> performance notes	Audio recording (WAV format / MP3 format no lower than 320kbps)
d	Audio recording (WAV format / MP3 format no lower than 320kbps)	Raw audio files <u>and</u> written commentary

¹ The form will be disseminated to schools at the beginning of the year of examination.

Part 2: Reflection Notes (10 marks)

The Reflection Notes should elucidate the candidate's compositional responses to the chosen stimulus using the following guiding questions:

- How did the stimulus lead you to formulate and shape your musical ideas?
- What were one or two technical challenges in developing your ideas? How did you approach these challenges?

Instructions for supervision

Candidates will be allowed up to five hours of supervised time, over a period of up to nine weeks, for the completion of their composition and Reflection Notes. All finished compositions must be recorded. The time required for rehearsing and recording candidates' compositions is not part of the five hours of supervised time, unless the submission is the recording, in which case the recording must be completed within the five hours of supervised time.

Candidates will be allowed access to facilities (piano or keyboard, computer, audio recorder and microphone) during the supervised composition time.

All work drafts must be collected by the coursework supervisor at the end of each session and kept securely until final submission to SEAB.

The stimulus will be issued to candidates in July of the year of the examination and the candidate's composition must be submitted to SEAB by October in the year of the examination.

Composing to a stimulus

Candidates have to write to:

1 MUSICAL STIMULUS

- (i) a set of pitches, OR
- (ii) a given rhythmic motif

OR

2 TEXT STIMULUS

- (i) a poem, OR
- (ii) a set of lyrics

OR

3 CONTEXT STIMULUS

- (i) Context Stimulus 1, OR
- (ii) Context Stimulus 2

Other instructions

Each submission must be accompanied by a statement from the candidate's music teacher endorsed by the Principal of the candidate's school. Teachers will be expected to provide general guidance to the candidates to ensure that the work is completed according to the requirements. This should not in any way raise the standard of the work beyond the candidate's own capability. The teacher's supervision of the progress of the work should enable them to testify that the submission is the unaided work of the candidate and authenticate the score and recording. Unattributed plagiarism can lead to disqualification from the examination.

Coursework must be submitted to SEAB in October (a specific date will be given). Submissions should show the name and number of the centre, the candidate's name and examination number and the details of the examination, i.e. Ordinary Level Higher Music and paper number, i.e. 6086/2. Please note that the centre number used on the submission should match the centre number that was used on the statement of entry.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR CREATING (PAPER 2)

Paper 2 is worth **50** marks in total. The Composition is marked out of 40 and the Reflection Notes out of 10. Candidates will be marked according to the criteria given below:

	Criteria	Marks
1	Creation and structuring of musical ideas in response to the stimulus	10
2	Musical Coherence	10
3	Understanding of the Capabilities of the Chosen Medium	10
4(a)	Communication of Compositional Intentions (Score)	10
4(b)	OR Communication of Compositional Intentions in Technological Format (Recording)	
5	Reflection Notes	10
TOTAL		50

1 Creation and structuring of musical ideas in response to the stimulus

This criterion assesses the creation of musical ideas in response to the chosen stimulus, the suitability of the resulting structure and the appropriateness of the chosen style or tradition.

Descriptor	Mark
Musical ideas are strong and imaginative, with a convincing relationship to the stimulus and the resulting structure of the composition is entirely appropriate; the chosen style or tradition is maintained consistently throughout.	9–10
Musical ideas are well formed, showing a clear response to the stimulus, and the resulting structure of the composition is appropriate; the chosen style or tradition is maintained fairly consistently.	7–8
Musical ideas are adequately formed and derived from the stimulus, and the resulting structure is mainly appropriate; the chosen style or tradition is evident in some passages.	5–6
Musical ideas are loosely formed and the resulting structure is weakly expressed; there is some evidence of an attempt to work within the chosen style or tradition.	3–4
Musical ideas are poorly shaped and little attention is paid to the resulting structure of the composition; the chosen style or tradition is hardly apparent.	1–2
No creditable response to the stimulus.	0

2 Musical Coherence

This criterion assesses the coherence of the composition in terms of the development and linking of musical ideas through the use of compositional techniques and devices (including harmonisation of melodies and the use of appropriate devices).

Descriptor	Mark
The composition is entirely coherent, with highly effective use of devices and techniques to develop and link the musical ideas.	9–10
The composition is mostly coherent, with generally effective use of devices and techniques to develop and link the musical ideas.	7–8
The composition is reasonably coherent, with some effective use of devices and techniques to develop and link the musical ideas.	5–6
The composition shows some musical coherence, but the use of devices and techniques to develop and link the musical ideas is limited.	3–4
The composition shows little musical coherence, and the development and linking of musical ideas is mainly limited to repetition.	1–2
The composition shows no musical coherence, and there is no apparent attempt to develop or link musical ideas.	0

3 Understanding of the Capabilities of the Chosen Medium

This criterion assesses the understanding of technical capabilities (and limitations) of instrumental and/or vocal forces, including technology.

Descriptor	Mark
The work communicates a very secure understanding of the capabilities of the chosen medium.	9–10
The work communicates a secure understanding of the capabilities of the chosen medium.	7–8
The work communicates a moderate understanding of the capabilities of the chosen medium.	5–6
The work shows some understanding of the capabilities of the chosen medium.	3–4
The work shows very limited understanding of the capabilities of the chosen medium.	1–2
The work shows no understanding of the capabilities of the chosen medium.	0

4(a) Communication of Compositional Intentions (Score)

This criterion assesses the suitability of the chosen form of notation, and its consistency to performance detail, in communicating the aural imagination and compositional intentions effectively.

Descriptor	Mark
Accurate, clear and detailed use of appropriate notation and markings that enable the effective communication of the technical and expressive intentions of the composition.	9–10
Mainly accurate, clear and detailed notation and markings that enable the effective communication of most of the technical and expressive intentions of the composition.	7–8
Accurate notation and markings but with some inconsistencies/errors that enable a general communication of the technical and expressive intentions of the composition in most places.	5–6
Partially accurate notation and markings that enable the communication of some of the technical and expressive intentions of the composition.	3–4
Erratic or unclear use of notation and markings that barely enable the composition to be adequately communicated.	1–2
No notation offered and/or no appropriate means of communicating the musical intentions.	0

4(b) Communication of Compositional Intentions in Technological Format (Recording)

This criterion assesses the control and manipulation of analogue and/or digital sounds in the submitted final mix (recording) in communicating the aural imagination and compositional intentions effectively.

Descriptor	Mark
The final mix is well-balanced, sound quality is excellent, the stereo field is effectively used, and dynamics are carefully controlled. There are no unintentional sonic artefacts and/or distortion, and the communication of the composer's intentions is excellent.	9–10
The final mix is mainly well-balanced, sound quality is good, the stereo field is effectively used, and dynamics are well controlled. Only very occasional and slight unintentional sonic artefacts and/or distortion occur, and the communication of the composer's intentions is mostly effective.	7–8
The final mix is fairly well-balanced, although one or more technical aspects may distort the overall effect. Unintentional sonic artefacts and/or distortion are audible in a number of places, and the communication of the composer's intentions is fairly effective.	5–6
The final mix lacks effective balance, and there are several technical inconsistencies. Unintentional sonic artefacts and/or distortion affect the musical outcome and impede the effective communication of the composer's intentions.	3–4
The final mix is poorly balanced, with many technical inconsistencies that interfere with the musical effect. Communication of the composer's intentions is seriously impaired by poor overall sonic quality.	1–2
The final mix is distorted or erratic.	0

Overall descriptors and mark bands for composition:

Descriptor	Mark
<p>The composition communicates an imaginative response to the stimulus. Musical ideas are strong and well developed through highly effective use of devices and techniques; there is excellent structural and stylistic coherence and a very secure understanding of the chosen medium.</p> <p>Scores (where appropriate) are accurate, well-presented and show attention to detail throughout; recorded sound quality (where appropriate) is excellent, and the final mix is well-balanced.</p>	33–40
<p>The composition communicates a clear response to the stimulus. Musical ideas are well formed and mainly well developed through effective use of devices and techniques; there is secure structural and stylistic coherence and a secure understanding of the chosen medium.</p> <p>Scores (where appropriate) are well-presented overall, and show reasonable attention to detail; recorded sound quality (where appropriate) is very good, and the final mix is mainly well-balanced.</p>	25–32
<p>The composition communicates a general response to the stimulus. Musical ideas are adequately developed through some effective use of devices and techniques; there is reasonable structural and stylistic coherence and a moderate understanding of the chosen medium.</p> <p>Scores (where appropriate) are fairly accurate, with occasional inconsistencies/errors; recorded sound quality (where appropriate) is reasonably good, though with some unintended distortion, and the final mix is fairly well balanced.</p>	17–24
<p>The composition communicates an uneven response to the stimulus. Musical ideas are inconsistently developed through inconsistent use of devices and techniques; there is some structural and stylistic coherence and some understanding of the chosen medium.</p> <p>Scores (where appropriate) are partially accurate, with persistent inconsistencies/errors; recorded sound quality (where appropriate) contains several unintended distortions, and the final mix lacks effective balance.</p>	9–16
<p>The composition communicates a weak response to the stimulus. Musical ideas are loosely formed with little evidence of the use of devices and techniques; there is little structural or stylistic coherence and a limited understanding of the chosen medium.</p> <p>Scores (where appropriate) are unclear, with significant inconsistencies/errors; recorded sound quality (where appropriate) is poor, and the final mix is poorly balanced.</p>	1–8
No creditable work submitted.	0

5 Reflection Notes (400–500 words)

This task enables candidates to demonstrate their ability to articulate how their musical ideas were shaped in relation to the chosen stimulus, how they responded to the creative and technical challenges involved, and how musical decisions about medium, techniques and organisation of materials were taken. Candidates are expected to use appropriate technical vocabulary to communicate their musical ideas and decisions.

Descriptor	Mark
A detailed and convincing explanation of how the musical ideas were formulated, developed, and organised in relation to the chosen stimulus. A detailed and convincing explanation of the relevant creative and technical challenges encountered during the process of composing, as well as the evaluation of attempted solutions. Appropriate and secure use of technical vocabulary.	9–10
A clear explanation of how the musical ideas were formulated, developed, and organised in relation to the chosen stimulus. A clear explanation of the relevant creative and technical challenges encountered during the process of composing, as well as the evaluation of attempted solutions. Mostly appropriate and secure use of technical vocabulary.	7–8
A general explanation, but lacking in detail, of how the musical ideas were formulated, developed, and organised in relation to the chosen stimulus. A general explanation of the relevant creative and technical challenges encountered during the process of composing, and a description of some attempted solutions. Some appropriate technical vocabulary is used.	5–6
A weak explanation of how the musical ideas were formulated, developed, and organised in relation to the chosen stimulus. A partial explanation of the relevant creative and technical challenges encountered during the process of composing, and a brief description of some attempted solutions. Limited use of appropriate vocabulary.	3–4
Explanation of how the musical ideas were formulated, developed, and organised in relation to the chosen stimulus is unclear, with little or no reference to the chosen stimulus. Little attempt to explain the relevant creative and technical challenges encountered during the process of composing, with minimal reference to attempted solutions. Technical vocabulary is used sparingly or inappropriately.	1–2
No work submitted or work does not meet minimum criteria in the band above.	0

PAPER 3**PERFORMING**

Weighting

30%

Assessment Format

Recital and Reflection Notes (50 marks)

Paper 3 has two parts: Part 1 (Recital) and Part 2 (Reflection Notes).

Part 1: Recital (5–10 minutes) (40 marks)

Part 1 will assess candidates' technical competence and musical understanding through two performances of their own choice of music, including improvisation, of any style or tradition. The total performing time should be between 5 and 10 minutes. Candidates will be required to provide their own accompanist and ensemble where appropriate.

Candidates are required to perform two items, each marked out of 40. They must choose one of the following options:

Option 1

Two contrasting pieces* on one solo instrument or voice from any style/tradition.

OR***Option 2***

Two contrasting pieces*:

One piece* or movement on one solo instrument or voice from any style/tradition

and

any one of the following from any style/tradition:

- one piece* on a second instrument
- Ensemble (on the first or second instrument)
- Accompaniment (on the first or second instrument)

For guidelines on the options listed above, selection of repertoire and instrument combination, please refer to page 65 at the end of the syllabus document.

Candidates should perform music appropriate, in its technical and musical demands, to their stage of development at the time of the examination. They will be given positive credit for the following:

- Technical control or Quality of improvisation (e.g. accuracy in notes and rhythm; choice and control of tempo; ensemble coordination, if applicable)
- Musicality and Sensitivity (e.g. sensitivity to articulation, phrasing and dynamics, understanding of musical style, genre and cultural context of the chosen repertoire; blend and balance with the other members of the ensemble or soloist, if applicable)

Candidates will be examined by two examiners at a live performance.

* 'Pieces' also refer to improvisations as well.

Part 2: Reflection Notes (10 marks)

Part 2 will assess candidates' musical understanding as well as their reflection on musical decisions in the process of their performance preparation.

Candidates are required to submit Reflection Notes of 400–500 words. The Reflection Notes should convey candidates' performative understanding of the pieces and/or conceptualisation of their improvisations along with reflections on their musical and technical preparation. Candidates may consider reflecting on the following items:

- Musical decisions made in terms of stylistic interpretation/conceptualisation, and shaping of the music
- Performative issues pertaining to technical demands, challenges and performance practice considerations

Candidates are also encouraged to draw on relevant research information and recordings in their reflection.

Other instructions

The Reflection Notes should be written under the supervision of the O-Level Music teacher, who will be required to certify that the Reflection Notes submitted are the work of the individual candidate who claims authorship.

The Reflection Notes must be submitted together with the Performing Programme Form and copies of the score (if applicable) for the recital examination.

A completed form outlining the pieces chosen for Paper 3 must be submitted to SEAB. Schools will be advised of the exact date of submission 1–2 months before the date of examination.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR PERFORMING (PAPER 3)

Paper 3 is worth **50** marks in total. The mark out of 80 for Part 1 is divided by 2 (rounding up any odd number) to give a total out of 40 for Part 1. This is added to the mark out of 10 for Part 2, to give a final total out of 50 for this component.

Candidates will be marked according to the criteria given below:

	Criteria	Piece 1	Piece 2
Part 1: Recital (Solo OR Ensemble OR Accompanying)			
1(a)	Technical control appropriate to the style or genre of the music OR Quality of improvisation	20 marks	20 marks
1(b)	Musicality and Sensitivity	20 marks	20 marks
SUBTOTAL		80 marks divided by 2 = 40 marks	
Part 2: Reflection Notes <i>The mark awarded for the reflection notes will be independent of the mark awarded for the recital.</i>			
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Understanding of the creative/technical challenges and/or improvisation approaches in music selected/conceptualised for the performanceReflection on the musical decisions made in the process of preparation for the performance, including an understanding of the musical styles or contexts that influence their decisionsUse of appropriate technical vocabulary	10 marks	
TOTAL		50 marks	

1(i) Solo Performance on First or Second Instrument: Technical control appropriate to the style or genre of the music

Descriptor	Mark
Excellent technical control of the instrument with well-developed skills; performance is accurate in notes and rhythm and completely fluent; appropriate choice of tempo, consistently maintained throughout the performance.	17–20
Good technical control of the instrument with fairly well-developed skills; mostly accurate in notes and rhythm and mainly secure with some inaccuracies, but not enough to disturb the fluency of the performance; appropriate choice of tempo, maintained through most of the performance.	13–16
Moderately good technical control with moderately developed skills; moderately accurate in notes and rhythm, but with a number of inaccuracies which disturb the fluency of some parts of the performance; choice of tempo is acceptable but with inconsistencies in some parts of the performance.	9–12
Some significant weakness in technical control with less well-developed skills; somewhat accurate in notes and rhythm but hesitant, sometimes serious enough to impair the fluency in many parts of the performance; a less appropriate choice of tempo with fluctuations in many parts of the performance.	5–8
Very weak technical control with modest skills; little accuracy in notes and rhythm, with persistent hesitancy, showing little fluency throughout most of the performance; an inappropriate choice of tempo, or an acceptable tempo with fluctuations in most parts of the performance.	1–4
The work does not meet the criteria in the band above.	0

1(i) Solo Performance on First or Second Instrument: Musicality and Sensitivity

Descriptor	Mark
Performance is highly expressive through sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating a very secure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the chosen repertoire.	17–20
Performance is mostly expressive through the sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating a secure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the chosen repertoire.	13–16
Performance is fairly expressive through the sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating some understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the chosen repertoire.	9–12
Performance shows some expression with uneven control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating little understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the chosen repertoire.	5–8
Performance lacks expressive awareness or intention due to limited control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating an insecure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the music.	1–4
The work does not meet the criteria in the band above.	0

1(ii) Ensemble or Accompanying: Technical control and coordination appropriate to the style or genre of the music

Descriptor	Mark
Excellent technical control and coordination with ensemble/soloist, with well-developed skills. Strong rapport with other performers through careful listening and effective non-verbal cues. Wholly accurate in notes and rhythm and completely fluent. Appropriate choice of tempo, consistently maintained throughout the performance.	17–20
Good technical control and coordination with ensemble/soloist, with fairly well-developed skills. Good rapport with other performers through careful listening and effective non-verbal cues. Mostly accurate in notes and rhythm and mainly secure with some inaccuracies, but not enough to disturb the basic fluency of the performance. Appropriate choice of tempo, maintained throughout most of the performance.	13–16
Moderately good technical control and coordination with ensemble/soloist, with moderately developed skills. A moderate level of communication with other performers through some listening and non-verbal cues. Moderately accurate in notes and rhythm, but with a number of inaccuracies which disturb the fluency of some parts of the performance. Choice of tempo is acceptable but with inconsistencies in some parts of the performance.	9–12
Some significant weakness in technical control and generally weak coordination with ensemble/soloist, with less well-developed skills. Some communication with other performers through occasional listening. Somewhat accurate in notes and rhythm but hesitant, sometimes serious enough to impair the fluency in many parts of the performance. A less appropriate choice of tempo, or an acceptable tempo with fluctuations in many parts of the performance.	5–8
Very weak technical control and poor coordination with ensemble/soloist, with modest skills. A weak level of communication with other performers through inattentiveness in listening. Little accuracy in notes and rhythm, with persistent hesitancy, showing little fluency throughout most of the performance. An inappropriate choice of tempo with fluctuations in most parts of the performance.	1–4
The work does not meet the criteria in the band above.	0

1(ii) Ensemble or Accompanying: Musicality and Sensitivity

Descriptor	Mark
Performance is highly expressive through the sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating a very secure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the chosen repertoire. Excellently blended and balanced with the other members of ensemble or soloist.	17–20
Performance is mostly expressive through the sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating a secure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the chosen repertoire. Effectively blended and balanced with the other members of ensemble or soloist.	13–16
Performance is fairly expressive through the sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating some understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the chosen repertoire. Moderately well blended and balanced with the other members of ensemble or soloist.	9–12
Performance shows some expression with uneven control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating little understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the chosen repertoire. Sometimes well blended and balanced with the other members of ensemble or soloist.	5–8
Performance lacks expressive awareness or intention due to limited control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating an insecure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the music. Little attempt to blend and balance with the other members of the ensemble or soloist.	1–4
The work does not meet the criteria in the band above.	0

1(iii) Solo Improvisation on First or Second Instrument: Quality of improvisation

Descriptor	Mark
Excellent technical control of the instrument with well-developed skills; appropriate choice of tempo, consistently maintained throughout the performance; completely fluent; well-structured and coherent quality of improvisation showing a high level of musical inventiveness.	17–20
Good technical control of the instrument with fairly well-developed skills; appropriate choice of tempo, maintained through most of the performance; mainly fluent; mostly well-structured and consistent quality of improvisation showing a good level of musical inventiveness.	13–16
Moderately good technical control with moderately developed skills; choice of tempo is acceptable but with inconsistencies in some parts of the performance; fluency is disturbed in some parts of the performance; moderately structured and mostly consistent quality of improvisation showing some musical inventiveness.	9–12
Some significant weakness in technical control with less well-developed skills; a less appropriate choice of tempo with fluctuations in many parts of the performance; many parts of the performance have impaired fluency; loosely structured and inconsistent quality of improvisation showing little musical inventiveness.	5–8
Very weak technical control with modest skills; inappropriate choice of tempo, or an acceptable tempo with fluctuations in most parts of the performance; little fluency throughout most of the performance; poorly structured quality of improvisation showing limited musical inventiveness.	1–4
The work does not meet the criteria in the band above.	0

1(iii) Solo Improvisation on First or Second Instrument: Musicality and Sensitivity

Descriptor	Mark
Performance is highly expressive through the sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating a very secure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context (where applicable) of the improvisations.	17–20
Performance is mostly expressive through the sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating a secure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context (where applicable) of the improvisations.	13–16
Performance is fairly expressive through the sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating some understanding of the style, genre and cultural context (where applicable) of the improvisations.	9–12
Performance shows some expression with uneven control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating little understanding of the style, genre and cultural context (where applicable) of the improvisations.	5–8
Performance lacks expressive awareness or intention due to limited control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating an insecure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context (where applicable) of the music.	1–4
The work does not meet the criteria in the band above.	0

1(iv) Ensemble or Accompanying: Quality of improvisation

Descriptor	Mark
Excellent technical control and coordination with ensemble/soloist, with well-developed skills. Strong rapport with other performers through careful listening and effective non-verbal cues. Appropriate choice of tempo consistently maintained throughout the performance. Completely fluent. Well-structured and coherent quality of improvisation showing a high level of musical inventiveness.	17–20
Good technical control and coordination with ensemble/soloist, with fairly well-developed skills. Good rapport with other performers through careful listening and effective non-verbal cues. Appropriate choice of tempo maintained throughout most of the performance. Mainly fluent. Mostly well-structured and consistent quality of improvisation showing a good level of musical inventiveness.	13–16
Moderately good technical control and coordination with ensemble/soloist, with moderately developed skills. A moderate level of communication with other performers through some listening and non-verbal cues. Choice of tempo is acceptable but with inconsistencies in some parts of the performance. Fluency is disturbed in some parts of the performance. Moderately structured and mostly consistent quality of improvisation showing some musical inventiveness.	9–12
Some significant weakness in technical control and generally weak coordination with ensemble/soloist, with less well-developed skills. Some communication with other performers through occasional listening. A less appropriate choice of tempo, or an acceptable tempo with fluctuations in many parts of the performance. Many parts of the performance have impaired fluency. Loosely structured and inconsistent quality of improvisation showing little musical inventiveness.	5–8
Very weak technical control and poor coordination with ensemble/soloist, with modest skills. A weak level of communication with other performers through inattentiveness in listening. An inappropriate choice of tempo with fluctuations in most parts of the performance. Little fluency throughout most of the performance. Poorly structured quality of improvisation showing limited musical inventiveness.	1–4
The work does not meet the criteria in the band above.	0

1(iv) Ensemble or Accompanying: Musicality and Sensitivity

Descriptor	Mark
Performance is highly expressive through the sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating a very secure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context (where applicable) of the improvisations. Excellently blended and balanced with the other members of ensemble or soloist.	17–20
Performance is mostly expressive through the sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating a secure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context (where applicable) of the improvisations. Effectively blended and balanced with the other members of ensemble or soloist.	13–16
Performance is fairly expressive through the sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating some understanding of the style, genre and cultural context (where applicable) of the improvisations. Moderately well blended and balanced with the other members of ensemble or soloist.	9–12
Performance shows some expression with uneven control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating little understanding of the style, genre and cultural context (where applicable) of the improvisations. Sometimes well blended and balanced with the other members of ensemble or soloist.	5–8
Performance lacks expressive awareness or intention due to limited control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating an insecure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context (where applicable) of the improvisations. Little attempt to blend and balance with the other members of the ensemble or soloist.	1–4
The work does not meet the criteria in the band above.	0

Overall descriptors and mark bands for performance:

Descriptors	Mark
Performances which are consistently excellent in musicianship and control of technique, communicating a very high level of musical understanding of the programme that demands highly developed skills appropriate for this level and consistent with the candidate's technical development.	33–40
Performances which are very good in musicianship and control of technique, communicating a high level of musical understanding of the programme that demands well-developed skills appropriate for this level and mostly consistent with the candidate's technical development.	27–32
Performances which are fairly good in most respects, demonstrating a developing level of musicianship and technique, communicating a good general understanding of the programme for this level, but less even in quality than the higher categories or with some limitations of technique or musicianship.	20–26
Performances which are good in some respects, though more limited in musicianship and/or technique, communicating a restricted understanding of the programme which may not be altogether appropriate to the candidate's technical ability at this level.	13–19
Performances in which limitations of technique or musicianship are significant enough to impede the communication of musical understanding in some important respects in the programme which offer only limited opportunities to display technical and musical skills appropriate to this level.	6–12
Performances which display significant weaknesses in musicianship or technique.	1–5
No work submitted or the work does not meet the criteria in the band above.	0

2 Reflection Notes (400–500 words)

Descriptor	Mark
Excellent understanding of the creative and technical challenges of the programme presented. A comprehensive and cogent reflection on a wide range of issues arising from the performance and its preparation. Appropriate technical vocabulary is used securely with evidence of very good research and informed musical decisions.	9–10
Good understanding of the creative and technical challenges of the programme presented. A thorough and articulate reflection on a range of issues arising from the performance and its preparation. Appropriate technical vocabulary is used, mostly securely with evidence of moderately good research and informed musical decisions.	7–8
Moderate understanding of the creative and technical challenges of the programme presented. A fairly accurate reflection on a range of issues arising from the performance and its preparation. Some appropriate technical vocabulary is used with some evidence of good research and informed musical decisions.	5–6
Some understanding of the creative and technical challenges of the programme presented. Some attempt to reflect on certain issues arising from the performance and its preparation, but little evidence of research and informed musical decisions.	3–4
Very little understanding of the creative and technical challenges of the programme presented. Limited attempt to reflect on a few of the issues arising from the performance and its preparation. Technical vocabulary is used sparingly or inappropriately. No evidence of research and informed musical decisions.	1–2
No work submitted or the work does not meet the criteria in the band above.	0

PAPER 12

Assessment Format

RESEARCH ESSAY

Coursework (50 marks)

Paper 12 requires candidates to submit an essay of 1500–2000 words. The essay should be the result of the candidate's individual inquiry into a subject of his or her own choice. The depth and/or scope of the inquiry must extend the candidate's work beyond the requirements of Paper 1. The music chosen for investigation must not be drawn from or lie within any of the genres defined in the Areas of Study.

The primary concern of every inquiry and resulting essay must be the study of music itself. All topics of inquiry should be chosen with a view to promote and extend the candidate's listening and analytical skills. All essays submitted must be accompanied by details of the relevant music that the candidate has listened to in preparation for writing the essay. Any score(s)/transcript(s) and/or recorded extract(s) of music essential to understanding the essay are to be submitted for the examiner's reference.

All topics of inquiry and essay titles must have the approval of Cambridge Assessment International Education. Application for approval must be made to Cambridge Assessment International Education no later than October in the year preceding the examination.

Candidates will be expected to:

- Show aural attentiveness to a range of appropriate listening
- Show understanding of the context of the music chosen for investigation
- Show an ability to use appropriate investigation techniques
- Substantiate judgements and generalisations by reference to specific examples in the music studied
- Communicate findings clearly and, where appropriate, use technical vocabulary appropriately

Musical examples may be included in any of the following forms:

- Notated and embedded in the text of the essay
- Recorded as short extracts
- Identified by precise references to an attached score (by quoting bar numbers or rehearsal figures)
- Presented as diagrammatic or graphic representation of musical events

All sources of information and recorded examples must be correctly identified in a bibliography and discography (including programme notes, sleeve-notes and internet sources).

Other instructions

The coursework supervisors will be required to state the nature and extent of their contribution to the candidate's research process in the area of study and to certify that the inquiry and the essay submitted are the candidate's own work. It is the coursework supervisors' responsibility, as an integral part of their 'authentication' role, to check that all direct (or closed paraphrased) quotations of another author's words, whether from a book or an internet site, are set in quotation marks and a precise reference to the source given in a footnote.

Each candidate is given up to a maximum of five consultation hours with the coursework supervisor.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR RESEARCH ESSAY (PAPER 12)

Paper 12 is worth **50** marks in total. Candidates will be marked according to the criteria given below:

	Criteria	Marks
1	Aural attentiveness	10
2	Contextual understanding	10
3	Investigative techniques and technical vocabulary	10
4	Substantiation of judgments	10
5	Communication of findings and acknowledgement of sources	10
TOTAL		50

1 Aural attentiveness

Descriptor	Mark
Very close attention paid to an excellent range of appropriate listening, demonstrating a well-developed ability to distinguish significant features.	9–10
Close attention paid to a good range of listening, demonstrating a fairly well-developed ability to distinguish significant features.	7–8
Adequate attention paid to a fairly good range of appropriate listening, demonstrating some ability to distinguish significant features.	5–6
Some appropriate music heard and an attempt made to distinguish one or two relevant features.	3–4
A small amount of music heard but with little evidence of an attempt to identify any of its features.	1–2
No evidence of having listened to the music.	0

2 Contextual understanding

Descriptor	Mark
A very good understanding of significant contextual factors (including geographical/historical/biographical/social/technological or other cultural aspects as appropriate) and their relevance to the music under discussion.	9–10
A mostly good understanding of contextual factors (including geographical/historical/biographical/social/technological or other cultural aspects as appropriate) and their relevance to the music under discussion.	7–8
An adequate, but limited, understanding of appropriate contextual factors and their relevance to the music under discussion.	5–6
A partial understanding of some contextual factors.	3–4
A very little, or generally confused, understanding of a few contextual aspects.	1–2
No understanding of any contextual aspects demonstrated.	0

3 Investigative techniques and technical vocabulary

Descriptor	Mark
Confident use of appropriate analytic/investigative techniques and a wholly secure understanding of relevant musical terminology and its correct application.	9–10
Mostly confident use of appropriate analytic/investigative techniques and a fairly secure understanding of relevant musical terminology and its correct application.	7–8
Fairly confident use of appropriate investigative techniques and some understanding of relevant musical terminology.	5–6
A sensible attempt to explore relevant features of the music partly supported by an understanding of appropriate musical terminology.	3–4
Some attempt made to explore the musical processes.	1–2
No attempt made to explain how the music works.	0

4 Substantiation of judgments

Descriptor	Mark
All musical judgments fully supported by reference to wholly apt examples.	9–10
Almost all musical judgments supported by reference to relevant examples.	7–8
Most musical judgments supported by reference to partially relevant examples.	5–6
Some musical judgments illustrated by specific, but not very relevant, examples.	3–4
One or two musical judgments loosely illustrated by reference to the music.	1–2
No attempt made to support any musical judgments or generalisations by reference to the music.	0

5 Communication of findings and acknowledgement of sources

Descriptor	Mark
A thoroughly coherent essay which successfully conveys what has been learned, with all sources of information meticulously documented and referenced.	9–10
A coherent essay which is mostly successful in communicating what has been learned, with all sources of information carefully documented and referenced.	7–8
A clear presentation in connected prose which partially communicates a measure of learning, with all sources of information adequately documented and referenced.	5–6
Mainly notes, partly connected, which demonstrate limited assimilation of the material gathered, adequately documented.	3–4
Incoherent presentation of material showing little evidence of assimilation.	1–2
No evidence of any independent learning.	0

PAPER 22

Assessment Format

HIGHER CREATING

Composition Portfolio and Programme Notes (50 marks)

Paper 22 has two parts: Part 1 (Composition Portfolio) and Part 2 (Programme Notes).

Part 1 requires candidates to undertake a range of composing activities built on different musical concepts, genres, styles and/or forms. Each submission should consist of:

- Three complete compositions, with a total maximum performance time of 6 minutes, of which one must be composed solely using technology (e.g. electroacoustic music)
- Three pieces of Programme Notes, up to 500 words per piece for each composition
- A recording of each composition

Part 1: Composition Portfolio (40 marks)

Candidates must compose three complete compositions with a total maximum performance time of 6 minutes. The duration of each composition will be decided by the candidate.

At least one of the three compositions must employ music technology. Candidates must also ensure that the compositions submitted for this Elective are recognisably different from those submitted for Paper 2.

Each composition should be a complete piece that is built on a chosen musical concept, genre, style and/or form. Candidates may use any style, technique or tradition listed in the Areas of Study, or beyond, and compose for any instrument(s) and/or voice(s). Candidates may write for voices and/or a range of instruments, such as acoustic, electric, electronic and self-made instruments. Computer-generated sounds, digital sound sources and/or modifiers may also be included.

Unless a piece has been composed using music technology, all compositions must be notated using staff notation or any other convention form of notation (e.g. cipher notation, lead sheet) that are appropriate to the style of the music. If an alternative form of notation is used (e.g. graphic score), candidates must ensure that it clearly communicates their compositional intentions. Such scores should be accompanied by performance notes that explain the system of notation. Scores may be either handwritten or computer-generated, but they must be accurately edited.

Candidates who submit a lead sheet or who submit a composition that uses music technology (see options b and d in the table below) must also submit a written commentary. Score submissions may not be necessary for compositions that use music technology. For compositions that fall into this category (e.g. electroacoustic composition), the audio recording submitted will be assessed in place of a score. Any borrowed materials, sources of pre-set loops, and/or pre-recorded samples must be acknowledged in the Programme Notes and in the Coursework Submission Form provided by SEAB, and also exported as individual audio files for verification purposes by Cambridge Assessment International Education.

Performance indications should be clear and precise. Examiners will credit work that displays evidence of a careful and intelligent attempt to notate musical ideas and which pays close attention to details of performance, regardless of the notation medium; they will assess how effectively candidates are able to communicate the aural imagination in terms of written signs and symbols.

The table below illustrates all the possible options for the submission of the Higher Creating component:

	As substantive document [compulsory and assessed]	For illustrative purposes [compulsory but not assessed]
a	Staff notation	Audio recording (WAV format / MP3 format no lower than 320kbps)
b	Lead sheet <u>and</u> written commentary (including staff notation of grooves, etc.)	Audio recording (WAV format / MP3 format no lower than 320kbps)
c	Graphic notation and performance notes	Audio recording (WAV format / MP3 format no lower than 320kbps)
d	Audio recording (WAV format / MP3 format no lower than 320kbps)	Raw audio files <u>and</u> written commentary

A music technology composition may form an independent audio piece, or may provide the soundtrack for film, video or animation. For music technology compositions, where a score may not be appropriate, candidates may submit a recording supported by audio clips of drafts in place of a conventional score.

Tasks in a Western, tonal style should demonstrate familiarity with the basic principles of traditional harmonic language; such compositions must be fully notated using staff notation. Pieces written in any other style may be notated in any form of notation that is conventional to the style of music. Parts for transposed instruments may be written either in the relevant transposed keys or at concert pitch, but candidates are required to indicate the choice they have made. One of the compositions may also take the form of an arrangement of a pre-existing piece. The original piece may come from any culture and be arranged in any style.

All drafts showing the teacher's annotations, suggestions and corrections should be included with the final version of the work.

Part 2: Programme Notes (10 marks)

Part 2 requires candidates to write a Programme Note of up to 500 words for each composition. The Programme Note should introduce the piece for the intended audience and offer brief analysis of the music, rather than a description or evaluation of the process of composition.

Any performance notes and written commentaries submitted for scores that are not in standard staff notation should be kept separate and distinct from the Programme Notes.

Candidates who make use of music technology in the process or presentation of their composition(s) must give full details in the Programme Note(s) of the event and nature of the skills and of the source that they have employed.

Other instructions

Coursework supervisors will be required to state the nature and extent of their contribution to the candidate's creating process in the area and to certify that the composition tasks submitted are the work of the individual candidate who claims authorship.

Each candidate is given up to a maximum of five consultation hours with the coursework supervisor.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR HIGHER CREATING (PAPER 22)

Paper 22 is worth **50** marks in total. Each composition is marked out of 40 and each Programme Note out of 10. The final mark is an average of the mark awarded for each piece.

Candidates will be marked according to the criteria given below:

	Criteria	Marks
1	Creation and structuring of musical ideas in response to the stimulus	10
2	Musical Coherence	10
3	Understanding of the Capabilities of the Chosen Medium	10
4(a)	Communication of Compositional Intentions (Score)	10
4(b)	OR Communication of Compositional Intentions in Technological Format (Recording)	
5	Reflection Notes	10
TOTAL		50

1 Creation and structuring of musical ideas in response to the stimulus

This criterion assesses the creation of musical ideas in response to the chosen stimulus, the suitability of the resulting structure and the appropriateness of the chosen style or tradition.

Descriptor	Mark
Musical ideas are strong and imaginative, with a convincing relationship to the stimulus and the resulting structure of the composition is entirely appropriate; the chosen style or tradition is maintained consistently throughout.	9–10
Musical ideas are well formed, showing a clear response to the stimulus, and the resulting structure of the composition is appropriate; the chosen style or tradition is maintained fairly consistently.	7–8
Musical ideas are adequately formed and derived from the stimulus, and the resulting structure is mainly appropriate; the chosen style or tradition is evident in some passages.	5–6
Musical ideas are loosely formed and the resulting structure is weakly expressed; there is some evidence of an attempt to work within the chosen style or tradition.	3–4
Musical ideas are poorly shaped and little attention is paid to the resulting structure of the composition; the chosen style or tradition is hardly apparent.	1–2
No creditable response to the stimulus.	0

2 Musical Coherence

This criterion assesses the coherence of the composition in terms of the development and linking of musical ideas through the use of compositional techniques and devices (including harmonisation of melodies and the use of appropriate devices).

Descriptor	Mark
The composition is entirely coherent, with highly effective use of devices and techniques to develop and link the musical ideas.	9–10
The composition is mostly coherent, with generally effective use of devices and techniques to develop and link the musical ideas.	7–8
The composition is reasonably coherent, with some effective use of devices and techniques to develop and link the musical ideas.	5–6
The composition shows some musical coherence, but the use of devices and techniques to develop and link the musical ideas is limited.	3–4
The composition shows little musical coherence, and the development and linking of musical ideas is mainly limited to repetition.	1–2
The composition shows no musical coherence, and there is no apparent attempt to develop or link musical ideas.	0

3 Understanding of the Capabilities of the Chosen Medium

This criterion assesses the understanding of technical capabilities (and limitations) of instrumental and/or vocal forces, including technology.

Descriptor	Mark
The work communicates a very secure understanding of the capabilities of the chosen medium.	9–10
The work communicates a secure understanding of the capabilities of the chosen medium.	7–8
The work communicates a moderate understanding of the capabilities of the chosen medium.	5–6
The work shows some understanding of the capabilities of the chosen medium.	3–4
The work shows very limited understanding of the capabilities of the chosen medium.	1–2
The work shows no understanding of the capabilities of the chosen medium.	0

4(a) Communication of Compositional Intentions (Score)

This criterion assesses the suitability of the chosen form of notation, and its consistency to performance detail, in communicating the aural imagination and compositional intentions effectively.

Descriptor	Mark
Accurate, clear and detailed use of appropriate notation and markings that enable the effective communication of the technical and expressive intentions of the composition.	9–10
Mainly accurate, clear and detailed notation and markings that enable the effective communication of most of the technical and expressive intentions of the composition.	7–8
Accurate notation and markings but with some inconsistencies/errors that enable a general communication of the technical and expressive intentions of the composition in most places.	5–6
Partially accurate notation and markings that enable the communication of some of the technical and expressive intentions of the composition.	3–4
Erratic or unclear use of notation and markings that barely enable the composition to be adequately communicated.	1–2
No notation offered and/or no appropriate means of communicating the musical intentions.	0

4(b) Communication of Compositional Intentions in Technological Format (Recording)

This criterion assesses the control and manipulation of analogue and/or digital sounds in the submitted final mix (recording) in communicating the aural imagination and compositional intentions effectively.

Descriptor	Mark
The final mix is well-balanced, sound quality is excellent, the stereo field is effectively used, and dynamics are carefully controlled. There are no unintentional sonic artefacts and/or distortion, and the communication of the composer's intentions is excellent.	9–10
The final mix is mainly well-balanced, sound quality is good, the stereo field is effectively used, and dynamics are well controlled. Only very occasional and slight unintentional sonic artefacts and/or distortion occur, and the communication of the composer's intentions is mostly effective.	7–8
The final mix is fairly well-balanced, although one or more technical aspects may distort the overall effect. Unintentional sonic artefacts and/or distortion are audible in a number of places, and the communication of the composer's intentions is fairly effective.	5–6
The final mix lacks effective balance, and there are several technical inconsistencies. Unintentional sonic artefacts and/or distortion affect the musical outcome and impede the effective communication of the composer's intentions.	3–4
The final mix is poorly balanced, with many technical inconsistencies that interfere with the musical effect. Communication of the composer's intentions is seriously impaired by poor overall sonic quality.	1–2
The final mix is distorted or erratic.	0

Overall descriptors and mark bands for composition:

Descriptor	Mark
<p>The composition communicates an imaginative response to the stimulus. Musical ideas are strong and well developed through highly effective use of devices and techniques; there is excellent structural and stylistic coherence and a very secure understanding of the chosen medium.</p> <p>Scores (where appropriate) are accurate, well-presented and show attention to detail throughout; recorded sound quality (where appropriate) is excellent, and the final mix is well-balanced.</p>	33–40
<p>The composition communicates a clear response to the stimulus. Musical ideas are well formed and mainly well developed through effective use of devices and techniques; there is secure structural and stylistic coherence and a secure understanding of the chosen medium.</p> <p>Scores (where appropriate) are well-presented overall, and show reasonable attention to detail; recorded sound quality (where appropriate) is very good, and the final mix is mainly well-balanced.</p>	25–32
<p>The composition communicates a general response to the stimulus. Musical ideas are adequately developed through some effective use of devices and techniques; there is reasonable structural and stylistic coherence and a moderate understanding of the chosen medium.</p> <p>Scores (where appropriate) are fairly accurate, with occasional inconsistencies/errors; recorded sound quality (where appropriate) is reasonably good, though with some unintended distortion, and the final mix is fairly well balanced.</p>	17–24
<p>The composition communicates an uneven response to the stimulus. Musical ideas are inconsistently developed through inconsistent use of devices and techniques; there is some structural and stylistic coherence and some understanding of the chosen medium.</p> <p>Scores (where appropriate) are partially accurate, with persistent inconsistencies/errors; recorded sound quality (where appropriate) contains several unintended distortions, and the final mix lacks effective balance.</p>	9–16
<p>The composition communicates a weak response to the stimulus. Musical ideas are loosely formed with little evidence of the use of devices and techniques; there is little structural or stylistic coherence and a limited understanding of the chosen medium.</p> <p>Scores (where appropriate) are unclear, with significant inconsistencies/errors; recorded sound quality (where appropriate) is poor, and the final mix is poorly balanced.</p>	1–8
No creditable work submitted.	0

5 Programme Notes (up to 500 words)

The Programme Notes should offer an analysis of the music itself rather than a description or evaluation of the process of composition. Each composition should have a Programme Note of up to 500 words.

Descriptor	Mark
A very clear and accurate analysis of the characteristics of the music and the compositional techniques used, in relation to the intended context of the piece.	9–10
A mostly clear and accurate analysis of the characteristics of the music and the compositional techniques used, in relation to the intended context of the piece.	7–8
A fairly clear and accurate analysis of the characteristics of the music and the compositional techniques used, in relation to the intended context of the piece. There are some inconsistent levels of responses.	5–6
Some general, or sometimes inaccurate, description of the characteristics of the music, with some reference to the compositional techniques used and the intended context of the piece. There are inconsistent levels of responses.	3–4
A limited, or inaccurate, description of the characteristics of the music and the compositional techniques used, with brief mention of the compositional techniques and the intended context of the piece.	1–2
No work submitted or the work does not meet the criteria in the band above.	0

PAPER 32**HIGHER PERFORMING**

Assessment Format: Recital and *Viva Voce* (50 marks)

Part 1: Recital (8–12 minutes) (40 marks)

Paper 32 has two parts: Part 1 (Recital) and Part 2 (*Viva Voce*)

Part 1 will assess candidates' interpretative and musical understanding through two performances of their own choice of music, including improvisation, of any style or tradition, of which one must be an ensemble piece. The recital must consist of two contrasting pieces*. The total performance time should be between 8 and 12 minutes.

Candidates will be required to perform two items. In addition to one ensemble piece, candidates must choose any one of the following options:

- (a) A solo performance on an instrument (or voice) from any style/tradition
- (b) An ensemble performance on any instrument (or voice) from any style/tradition
- (c) An accompaniment on any instrument from any style/tradition
- (d) A solo/ensemble improvisation on an instrument (or voice) in a chosen improvisatory tradition

Candidates will be required to provide their own accompanist and ensemble where appropriate.

The pieces* presented must be different from those presented for Paper 3. For guidelines on the options listed above, the selection of repertoire and instrument combination, please refer to page 65 at the end of the syllabus document.

Candidates should perform music appropriate, in its technical and musical demands, to their stage of development at the time of the examination. In the ensemble performance, the candidate's part should not be extensively doubled by any other part to ensure that a valid judgement of the candidate's ensemble skills can be made. It is not necessary for all members of the ensemble to be examination candidates.

Marking will take place in accordance with the Assessment Criteria for Paper 3.

Candidates will be examined by two examiners at a live performance.

* 'Pieces' also refer to improvisations as well.

Part 2: Viva Voce (3–5 minutes) (10 marks)

Part 2 of Paper 32 will assess candidates' understanding of the music that they have performed, their evaluation of their rehearsal processes and an explanation for their interpretative choices.

Examiners will conduct a brief *viva voce* examination of candidates immediately after their recital performance. The *viva voce* will last 3 to 5 minutes, including time spent asking the questions.

Examiners should pose three questions to candidates in the course of the *viva voce* examination drawn from the three categories indicated below.

- Knowledge of chosen repertoire/improvisations
- Analysis of specific aspects of the music and performance techniques
- Rehearsal and preparation

In the event that a candidate is unable to answer clearly, or answers very briefly, the examiner may pose a follow-up question exploring the same point in order to enable the candidate to develop their answer more fully. In the event that a candidate is completely unable to answer, the examiner may substitute an alternative question in the same category on a different aspect of the music or the performance, but of the same level of difficulty.

Candidates' performance in the *viva voce* should be marked holistically according to the assessment criteria for Paper 32, taking into account all the answers given, rather than awarding marks for each answer, as some questions may be answered more fully than others.

Other instructions

A completed form outlining the pieces chosen for Papers 3 and 32 must be submitted to SEAB. Schools will be advised of the exact date of submission 1–2 months before the date of the examination.

Each candidate is given up to a maximum of five consultation hours with the coursework supervisor.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR HIGHER PERFORMING (PAPER 32)

Paper 32 is worth **50** marks in total. The mark out of 80 for Part 1 is divided by 2 (rounding up any odd number) to give a total out of 40 for Part 1. This is added to the mark out of 10 for Part 2, to give a final total out of 50 for this component.

Candidates will be marked according to the criteria given below:

	Criteria	Piece 1	Piece 2
Part 1: Recital			
1(a)	Technical control appropriate to the style or genre of the music OR Quality of improvisation	20 marks	20 marks
1(b)	Musicality and Sensitivity	20 marks	20 marks
SUBTOTAL		80 marks divided by 2 = 40 marks	
Part 2: Viva Voce			
2	Ability to explain performance/improvisation approaches, discuss rehearsal techniques and the process of recital preparation, with specific reference to skill development and/or interpretative decisions to demonstrate understanding of the chosen repertoire/improvisations.	10 marks	
TOTAL		50 marks	

1(i) Solo Performance on First or Second Instrument: Technical control appropriate to the style or genre of the music

Descriptor	Mark
Excellent technical control of the instrument with well-developed skills; performance is accurate in notes and rhythm and completely fluent; appropriate choice of tempo, consistently maintained throughout the performance.	17–20
Good technical control of the instrument with fairly well-developed skills; mostly accurate in notes and rhythm and mainly secure with some inaccuracies, but not enough to disturb the basic fluency of the performance; appropriate choice of tempo, maintained through most of the performance.	13–16
Moderately good technical control with moderately developed skills; moderately accurate in notes and rhythm, but with a number of inaccuracies which disturb the fluency of some parts of the performance; choice of tempo is acceptable but with inconsistencies in some parts of the performance.	9–12
Some significant weakness in technical control with less well-developed skills; somewhat accurate in notes and rhythm but hesitant, sometimes serious enough to impair the fluency in many parts of the performance; a less appropriate choice of tempo with fluctuations in many parts of the performance.	5–8
Very weak technical control with modest skills; little accuracy in notes and rhythm, with persistent hesitancy, showing little fluency throughout most of the performance; an inappropriate choice of tempo, or an acceptable tempo with fluctuations in most parts of the performance.	1–4
The work does not meet the criteria in the band above.	0

1(i) Solo Performance on First or Second Instrument: Musicality and Sensitivity

Descriptor	Mark
Performance is highly expressive through sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating a very secure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the chosen repertoire.	17–20
Performance is mostly expressive through the sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating a secure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the chosen repertoire.	13–16
Performance is fairly expressive through the sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating some understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the chosen repertoire.	9–12
Performance shows some expression with uneven control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating little understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the chosen repertoire.	5–8
Performance lacks expressive awareness or intention due to limited control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating an insecure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the music.	1–4
The work does not meet the criteria in the band above.	0

1(ii) Ensemble or Accompanying: Technical control and coordination appropriate to the style or genre of the music

Descriptor	Mark
Excellent technical control and coordination with ensemble/soloist, with well-developed skills. Strong rapport with other performers through careful listening and effective non-verbal cues. Wholly accurate in notes and rhythm and completely fluent. Appropriate choice of tempo, consistently maintained throughout the performance.	17–20
Good technical control and coordination with ensemble/soloist, with fairly well-developed skills. Good rapport with other performers through careful listening and effective non-verbal cues. Mostly accurate in notes and rhythm and mainly secure with some inaccuracies, but not enough to disturb the basic fluency of the performance. Appropriate choice of tempo, maintained throughout most of the performance.	13–16
Moderately good technical control and coordination with ensemble/soloist, with moderately developed skills. A moderate level of communication with other performers through some listening and non-verbal cues. Moderately accurate in notes and rhythm, but with a number of inaccuracies which disturb the fluency of some parts of the performance. Choice of tempo is acceptable but with inconsistencies in some parts of the performance.	9–12
Some significant weakness in technical control and generally weak coordination with ensemble/soloist, with less well-developed skills. Some communication with other performers through occasional listening. Somewhat accurate in notes and rhythm but hesitant, sometimes serious enough to impair the fluency in many parts of the performance. A less appropriate choice of tempo, or an acceptable tempo with fluctuations in many parts of the performance.	5–8
Very weak technical control and poor coordination with ensemble/soloist, with modest skills. A weak level of communication with other performers through inattentiveness in listening. Little accuracy in notes and rhythm, with persistent hesitancy, showing little fluency throughout most of the performance. An inappropriate choice of tempo with fluctuations in most parts of the performance.	1–4
The work does not meet the criteria in the band above.	0

1(ii) Ensemble or Accompanying: Musicality and Sensitivity

Descriptor	Mark
Performance is highly expressive through the sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating a very secure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the chosen repertoire. Excellently blended and balanced with the other members of ensemble or soloist.	17–20
Performance is mostly expressive through the sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating a secure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the chosen repertoire. Effectively blended and balanced with the other members of ensemble or soloist.	13–16
Performance is fairly expressive through the sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating some understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the chosen repertoire. Moderately well blended and balanced with the other members of ensemble or soloist.	9–12
Performance shows some expression with uneven control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating little understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the chosen repertoire. Sometimes well blended and balanced with the other members of ensemble or soloist.	5–8
Performance lacks expressive awareness or intention due to limited control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating an insecure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the music. Little attempt to blend and balance with the other members of the ensemble or soloist.	1–4
The work does not meet the criteria in the band above.	0

1(iii) Solo Improvisation on First or Second Instrument: Quality of improvisation

Descriptor	Mark
Excellent technical control of the instrument with well-developed skills; appropriate choice of tempo, consistently maintained throughout the performance; completely fluent; well-structured and coherent quality of improvisation showing a high level of musical inventiveness.	17–20
Good technical control of the instrument with fairly well-developed skills; appropriate choice of tempo, maintained through most of the performance; mainly fluent; mostly well-structured and consistent quality of improvisation showing a good level of musical inventiveness.	13–16
Moderately good technical control with moderately developed skills; choice of tempo is acceptable but with inconsistencies in some parts of the performance; fluency is disturbed in some parts of the performance; moderately structured and mostly consistent quality of improvisation showing some musical inventiveness.	9–12
Some significant weakness in technical control with less well-developed skills; a less appropriate choice of tempo with fluctuations in many parts of the performance; many parts of the performance have impaired fluency; loosely structured and inconsistent quality of improvisation showing little musical inventiveness.	5–8
Very weak technical control with modest skills; inappropriate choice of tempo, or an acceptable tempo with fluctuations in most parts of the performance; little fluency throughout most of the performance; poorly structured quality of improvisation showing limited musical inventiveness.	1–4
The work does not meet the criteria in the band above.	0

1(iii) Solo Improvisation on First or Second Instrument: Musicality and Sensitivity

Descriptor	Mark
Performance is highly expressive through the sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating a very secure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context (where applicable) of the improvisations.	17–20
Performance is mostly expressive through the sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating a secure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context (where applicable) of the improvisations.	13–16
Performance is fairly expressive through the sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating some understanding of the style, genre and cultural context (where applicable) of the improvisations.	9–12
Performance shows some expression with uneven control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating little understanding of the style, genre and cultural context (where applicable) of the improvisations.	5–8
Performance lacks expressive awareness or intention due to limited control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating an insecure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context (where applicable) of the music.	1–4
The work does not meet the criteria in the band above.	0

1(iv) Ensemble or Accompanying: Quality of improvisation

Descriptor	Mark
Excellent technical control and coordination with ensemble/soloist, with well-developed skills. Strong rapport with other performers through careful listening and effective non-verbal cues. Appropriate choice of tempo consistently maintained throughout the performance. Completely fluent. Well-structured and coherent quality of improvisation showing a high level of musical inventiveness.	17–20
Good technical control and coordination with ensemble/soloist, with fairly well-developed skills. Good rapport with other performers through careful listening and effective non-verbal cues. Appropriate choice of tempo maintained throughout most of the performance. Mainly fluent. Mostly well-structured and consistent quality of improvisation showing a good level of musical inventiveness.	13–16
Moderately good technical control and coordination with ensemble/soloist, with moderately developed skills. A moderate level of communication with other performers through some listening and non-verbal cues. Choice of tempo is acceptable but with inconsistencies in some parts of the performance. Fluency is disturbed in some parts of the performance. Moderately structured and mostly consistent quality of improvisation showing some musical inventiveness.	9–12
Some significant weakness in technical control and generally weak coordination with ensemble/soloist, with less well-developed skills. Some communication with other performers through occasional listening. A less appropriate choice of tempo, or an acceptable tempo with fluctuations in many parts of the performance. Many parts of the performance have impaired fluency. Loosely structured and inconsistent quality of improvisation showing little musical inventiveness.	5–8
Very weak technical control and poor coordination with ensemble/soloist, with modest skills. A weak level of communication with other performers through inattentiveness in listening. An inappropriate choice of tempo with fluctuations in most parts of the performance. Little fluency throughout most of the performance. Poorly structured quality of improvisation showing limited musical inventiveness.	1–4
The work does not meet the criteria in the band above.	0

1(iv) Ensemble or Accompanying: Musicality and Sensitivity

Descriptor	Mark
Performance is highly expressive through the sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating a very secure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context (where applicable) of the improvisations. Excellently blended and balanced with the other members of ensemble or soloist.	17–20
Performance is mostly expressive through the sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating a secure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context (where applicable) of the improvisations. Effectively blended and balanced with the other members of ensemble or soloist.	13–16
Performance is fairly expressive through the sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating some understanding of the style, genre and cultural context (where applicable) of the improvisations. Moderately well blended and balanced with the other members of ensemble or soloist.	9–12
Performance shows some expression with uneven control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating little understanding of the style, genre and cultural context (where applicable) of the improvisations. Sometimes well blended and balanced with the other members of ensemble or soloist.	5–8
Performance lacks expressive awareness or intention due to limited control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating an insecure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context (where applicable) of the improvisations. Little attempt to blend and balance with the other members of the ensemble or soloist.	1–4
The work does not meet the criteria in the band above.	0

Overall descriptors and mark bands for performance:

Descriptors	Mark
Performances which are consistently excellent in musicianship and control of technique, communicating a very high level of musical understanding of the programme that demands highly developed skills appropriate for this level and consistent with the candidate's technical development.	33–40
Performances which are very good in musicianship and control of technique, communicating a high level of musical understanding of the programme that demands well-developed skills appropriate for this level and mostly consistent with the candidate's technical development.	27–32
Performances which are fairly good in most respects, demonstrating a developing level of musicianship and technique, communicating a good general understanding of the programme for this level, but less even in quality than the higher categories or with some limitations of technique or musicianship.	20–26
Performances which are good in some respects, though more limited in musicianship and/or technique, communicating a restricted understanding of the programme which may not be altogether appropriate to the candidate's technical ability at this level.	13–19
Performances in which limitations of technique or musicianship are significant enough to impede the communication of musical understanding in some important respects in the programme which offer only limited opportunities to display technical and musical skills appropriate to this level.	6–12
Performances which display significant weaknesses in musicianship or technique.	1–5
No work submitted or the work does not meet the criteria in the band above.	0

2 Viva Voce

Descriptor	Mark
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent understanding of the programme and its genre, style or context • Clear and comprehensive explanation of performance/improvisation approaches with specific focus on musical examples • Well-informed and analytical discussion of rehearsal techniques and preparation with specific reference to skill development and/or interpretative decisions 	9–10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good understanding of the programme and its genre, style or context • Mostly clear explanation of performance/improvisation approaches with some appropriately chosen musical examples • Clear explanation of rehearsal techniques and preparation with secure reference to skill development and/or interpretative decisions 	7–8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly accurate understanding of the programme and its genre, style or context, perhaps briefly expressed • Simple but generally appropriate explanation of performance/improvisation approaches with mention of appropriate musical examples • Straightforward and general explanation of rehearsal techniques and preparation with outline reference to skill development and/or interpretative decisions 	5–6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incomplete or partially accurate understanding of the programme and its genre, style or context • Basic explanation of performance/improvisation approaches with some reference to musical examples • Some explanation of rehearsal techniques and preparation with some reference to skill development and/or interpretative decisions 	3–4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited understanding of the programme and its genre, style or context • Limited explanation of performance/improvisation approaches with minimal reference to musical examples • Limited explanation of rehearsal techniques and preparation with minimal reference to skill development and/or interpretative decisions 	1–2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No answers given or the answers do not meet the criteria in the band above 	0

NOTES FOR GUIDANCE

The information given below is intended to assist teachers in planning courses of study. It is not intended to be exhaustive.

PAPER 12 RESEARCH ESSAY

Examiners will be looking for evidence of what candidates have been listening to, what they have learnt and what progress they have made in developing their awareness of the type of music they are investigating. Candidates will need to be aware that research is not simply a matter of stringing together a group of relevant quotations or paraphrasing a couple of writers. They will need to demonstrate an assimilation of the information they have gathered.

In the process of the research, teachers should advise and guide the candidates in the following:

- Choosing a topic
- Gathering materials
- Investigative techniques
- Notation and musical quotations
- Structuring their essay

At the early stage of the preparation, the most important consideration should be the availability of adequate resources including a range of recorded music that will support the candidate's chosen study. At this level, it will be useful to start by guiding candidates on consistent and systematic gathering and storing of information. For instance, each entry should include complete bibliographical information so that there would not be a need to return for such details later. Candidates should also be guided towards a manageable topic for which they have the appropriate skills. In the process of revising their text, they should be encouraged to explore a range of music. Towards the end of the research process, candidates should ensure that there is a convincing link between the body of their text and their listening experience, with carefully chosen musical examples. In addition, the conclusion will need to deliver the candidate's informed ideas and opinions about the topic, and to give a logical closure to the essay. The final title need not be exactly the same as that submitted for approval. In most cases, a candidate will become more interested in one particular aspect of a topic as the study progresses and may wish, therefore, to modify the scope of the title of the final presentation.

In topics such as the study of music by a certain composer, candidates may choose to focus on analytical techniques. However, it is worth noting that 'analysis' is often too ambitious a word to apply to the descriptions of musical processes that most candidates can manage. It is not sufficient, in analysis, for candidates to observe principal events in the music such as 'who does what'. Candidates should attempt to discuss the style or musical language, and, in the analysis of songs, also examine the treatment of the text. An attempt should be made to acquire and present some background knowledge about the composer (e.g. the training and the influences that have shaped his/her style, some awareness of the most important works).

In investigating music that is not from the Western classical tradition, teachers should advise the candidates to be aware of the different musical values and social styles that characterise the cultural group. It will be useful to take into account the insider's perspective of the music wherever possible, and be careful with the use of Western terms to explain non-Western musical concepts. Making comparisons are useful for a broader understanding of the music under study but candidates should also note that *meaningful* comparisons between different music should go beyond the music-analytic details and take into account the broader socio-cultural or historical contexts. Understanding of the way in which a form of music is conceived, produced and received in its original setting will lead to a greater understanding of the music.

The following list gives examples of some of the possible topics of inquiry which candidates may choose to pursue. The investigation could include a study of:

- A composition by a contemporary Singaporean composer
- A segment of film music
- Music of *guqin*
- *Mahori* ensemble
- Music used in *Bharatanatyam*
- *Kronchong*
- John Cage's works for Prepared Piano
- Tchaikovsky's Ballet Music

This list is not exhaustive and candidates may propose any other topics of their own choice.

Note: Candidates must be made aware that copying quotations from other authors, giving the impression that the copied words or paragraphs are their own words, constitutes plagiarism.

PAPER 22 HIGHER CREATING**Composition Tasks**

Candidates should have opportunities to undertake a range of composing activities built on different musical concepts/genres/styles/forms. Candidates may also be given opportunities to compose through creative use of sampling, sequencing and multi-tracking techniques. It is envisaged that candidates will accumulate several short composition assignments from which they select three to develop into composition tasks. Composing may be carried out as group activity in the initial stages, but it will be necessary for the candidate to develop his/her own work independently at a later stage. Teachers should advise candidates to choose musical concepts/genres/styles/forms which are appropriate to their individual abilities.

Candidates may use any style or technique of their own choice: they may draw on the traditions listed in the Areas of Study, or on any other tradition. The three composition tasks could be written for the same instrument(s) or voice(s). The following list gives examples of some of the possible musical concept/genre/style/form which candidates may use for their composition tasks.

- Arch form
- Jazz
- Dance (e.g. Minuet and Trio, Waltz, Jig, *Asli*, *Joget*)
- Musical concepts of gamelan music
- Interlocking rhythms
- Chinese melodic ideas
- Indian *tala*
- African music
- Combination of concepts and/or techniques from different music traditions

Candidates must ensure that their composition tasks are recognisably different in scope from those submitted for Paper 2. Thus, a setting of a text for solo voice with or without accompaniment is not acceptable. One composition must include music technology.

The following list gives ideas for some of the possible types of writing which candidates may choose to submit. This list is not exhaustive:

- An instrumental solo (with or without accompaniment)
- A piece for chamber ensemble or vocal ensemble
- A piece for pitched and/or unpitched percussion
- A piece for one or more non-Western instruments
- An experimental piece using electronic sound devices
- A piece for two or more voices with or without accompaniment

In writing a composition for a chosen musical concept/genre/style/form, candidates should be encouraged to explore varied ways to add interest in their writing. They are not expected to be authentic to the tradition from which they draw. For instance, in drawing on the musical concept of gamelan music, they should not simply reproduce a piece of gamelan music that closely adheres to the polyphonic texture and stylised ornamentations. Instead, they should aim to demonstrate an extension of these principles with varied and innovative musical treatment.

Programme Notes

The aim of the Programme Notes is to assess the candidates' ability to introduce the music for an audience. The focus should be on providing a brief analysis of the music itself rather than a reflection on the process of composition.

Teachers should guide candidates to write about the intentions and characteristics of the music and what an audience should expect to listen for in performance.

Candidates may consider commenting on any of the following:

- The chosen musical concept, style, genre or form of the piece
- Starting points, stimulus or origins of the music
- Cultural associations of the work
- Characteristics of the music including tonality, rhythm, texture, tempo, etc.
- Chosen instrumentation/voices/use of technology
- Intended effect on the audience

PAPER 32 HIGHER PERFORMING**Recital**

As with Paper 3, candidates are advised to perform music appropriate in its technical and musical demands to their stage of development at the time of the examination. All candidates will be given positive credit for their abilities displayed in the examination.

Non-Western instruments may also be offered.

At least one of the pieces must be an ensemble work.

Viva Voce

Candidates should be prepared to answer questions posed by the examiner immediately after giving their recital. These questions will enable the candidate to explain how they have approached rehearsing and performing the pieces. Questions may cover areas such as:

- Style, period or genre of the music performed
- Characteristics of musical form or structure
- How the piece uses the sound qualities of the instrument
- The cultural context of the music
- Rehearsal processes
- Playing or singing techniques required
- Working with other musicians as ensemble or accompanist
- Interpretative decisions, e.g. tempo, ornaments, dynamics
- Expressive intentions of the performance
- Use of improvisation as part of the performance

This list is not exhaustive and examiners will choose questions appropriate to the music performed. The O-Level Music teacher should prepare candidates for this part of the assessment by encouraging them to discuss their understanding of the musical characteristics of the piece and the reasons for their interpretative choices. Candidates may also find it helpful to keep a written note of their rehearsal progress to help answer questions on preparation, although they will not be allowed to refer to this document in the examination. The *viva voce* will last 3 to 5 minutes and candidates should try to give as full an answer as possible. The examiner may vary or extend the questions to offer candidates the best opportunity to show their understanding.

GUIDELINES ON INSTRUMENT AND REPERTOIRE SELECTION

Additional Notes on Performing

For candidates offering Solo Instrument as an option:

The repertoire must be drawn from what is commonly understood as the solo repertoire of the instrument concerned. Candidates may choose to offer a Western or a non-Western instrument. However, in general:

- Pianists play solo piano music.
- Singers or performers on orchestral instruments are allowed to sing/play unaccompanied songs/music if the candidate so chooses. However, they must not play without an accompaniment if the music is intended to be accompanied.
- Performers who choose to sing and accompany themselves will be assessed on both the vocal and instrumental parts simultaneously using the Solo Performance assessment criteria.

For candidates offering Ensemble as an option:

- An ensemble is a performance by a group of instrumentalists (or singers), each of whom performs an individual part (i.e. the part played by the candidate who is being assessed must not be extensively doubled by any other member of the group). The music should allow sufficient interaction between the players to ensure that ensemble skills can be assessed.
- In most circumstances, there should be a minimum of three players in an Ensemble, so that a full range of ensemble skills can be demonstrated. However, pianists are permitted to offer piano duets (which should normally be genuine duets, not arrangements).
- For players of orchestral instruments (strings, woodwind or brass) the repertoire presented for examination normally consists of works (sonatas, concertos or some other genres) in which the solo instrument is accompanied on the piano, which plays either a part originally written for the piano, or an arrangement of an orchestral score. Such pieces always count as solo performances for the orchestral instrument, and may not be offered as ensembles.
- For singers, a full choir with several people singing the same part is not permissible; a small group, with one singer per part, would be required. Vocal duets with piano accompaniment need careful thought, even though three performers are involved. Pieces must allow for a sufficient range of genuine ensemble skills to be demonstrated.

For candidates offering Accompaniment as an option:

In most circumstances, when an accompaniment is played on the piano, there would be one accompanist. For practical reasons and manageability concerns about getting a group of players together at the scheduled time of the examination, candidates are advised that the music selected should involve no more than five accompanists.

For candidates offering a Second Instrument as an option:

Candidates are given the choice to present a different instrument from that presented in the first piece and/or in Paper 3. There is no restriction on the different types of instruments that can be featured. Non-Western instruments may also be offered.

For candidates offering Improvisation as an option:

Improvisation in Carnatic and Hindustani music, of jazz standards, creating a free improvisation, or a mash-up of existing contemporary popular repertoire, might be some common choices for O-Level Music candidates. The process of improvisation involves the art of creating or extemporising all or a large part of a composition at the moment of performance. For improvisations within a style, the candidate must thoroughly understand the stylistic conventions, such as, chord sequences, rhythmic patterns, melodic motives, prominent notes, and formulas, to be able to improvise effectively, which would result in cohesive performances. For free improvisations, coherence might be understood in terms of principles such as contrast and continuity, musical direction, balance and proportion, etc.

Candidates should note that improvising short sections of the score, such as fill-ins, ad libitum or improvised short sections (of a few bars) in a largely notated piece do not count as improvisation in this examination.

While it is not required to submit a fleshed out score of one's improvisation for the exam, it would be helpful to provide a visual guide, such as a lead sheet, a lyric sheet with chord symbols, a structural map that outlines improvisational intent, or any other relevant information appropriate for the genre and tradition performed to the examiners for their reference.