

Music subject report

2025 cohort

January 2026





© State of Queensland (QCAA) 2026

Licence: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0> | **Copyright notice:** www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/copyright — lists the full terms and conditions, which specify certain exceptions to the licence. |

Attribution (include the link): © State of Queensland (QCAA) 2026 www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/copyright.

Other copyright material in this publication is listed below.

1. Unless otherwise indicated, and with the exception of any personal information (e.g. images of people) or third-party material, student responses in this report are licensed under the CC BY 4.0 licence.

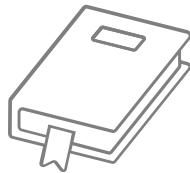
Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority
PO Box 307 Spring Hill QLD 4004 Australia

Phone: (07) 3864 0299
Email: office@qcaa.qld.edu.au
Website: www.qcaa.qld.edu.au

Contents

Introduction	1
Audience and use.....	1
Subject highlights.....	1
Subject data summary	2
Unit completion	2
Units 1 and 2 results	2
Units 3 and 4 internal assessment (IA) results	2
Total marks for IA	2
IA1 marks.....	3
IA2 marks.....	4
IA3 marks.....	5
External assessment (EA) marks	6
Final subject results	6
Final marks for IA and EA.....	6
Grade boundaries.....	7
Distribution of standards.....	7
Internal assessment	8
Endorsement	8
Confirmation	8
Internal assessment 1 (IA1)	9
Performance (20%).....	9
Assessment design	9
Assessment decisions.....	11
Internal assessment 2 (IA2)	19
Composition (20%)	19
Assessment design	19
Assessment decisions.....	21
Internal assessment 3 (IA3)	32
Integrated project (35%).....	32
Assessment design	32
Assessment decisions.....	34
External assessment	47
Examination (25%).....	47
Assessment design	47
Assessment decisions.....	47

Introduction



The annual subject reports seek to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement of internal and external assessment processes for all Queensland schools. The 2025 subject report is the culmination of the partnership between schools and the QCAA. It addresses school-based assessment design and judgments, and student responses to external assessment for General and General (Extension) subjects. In acknowledging effective practices and areas for refinement, it offers schools timely and evidence-based guidance to further develop student learning and assessment experiences for 2026.

The report also includes information about:

- how schools have applied syllabus objectives in the design and marking of internal assessments
- how syllabus objectives have been applied in the marking of external assessments
- patterns of student achievement
- important considerations to note related to the revised 2025 syllabus (where relevant).

The report promotes continuous improvement by:

- identifying effective practices in the design and marking of valid, accessible and reliable assessments
- recommending where and how to enhance the design and marking of valid, accessible and reliable assessment instruments
- providing examples that demonstrate best practice.

Schools are encouraged to reflect on the effective practices identified for each assessment, consider the recommendations to strengthen assessment design and explore the authentic student work samples provided.

Audience and use

This report should be read by school leaders, subject leaders, and teachers to:

- inform teaching and learning and assessment preparation
- assist in assessment design practice
- assist in making assessment decisions
- help prepare students for internal and external assessment.

The report is publicly available to promote transparency and accountability. Students, parents, community members and other education stakeholders can use it to learn about the assessment practices and outcomes for senior subjects.

Subject highlights

94%
of IA1
endorsed at
Application 1



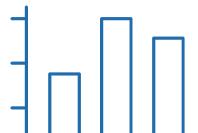
96.70%
agreement with
provisional marks
for IA2



97.51%
of students
received a
C or higher



Subject data summary



Unit completion

The following data shows students who completed the General subject or alternative sequence (AS).

Note: All data is correct as at January 2026. Where percentages are provided, these are rounded to two decimal places and, therefore, may not add up to 100%.

Number of schools that offered Music: 277.

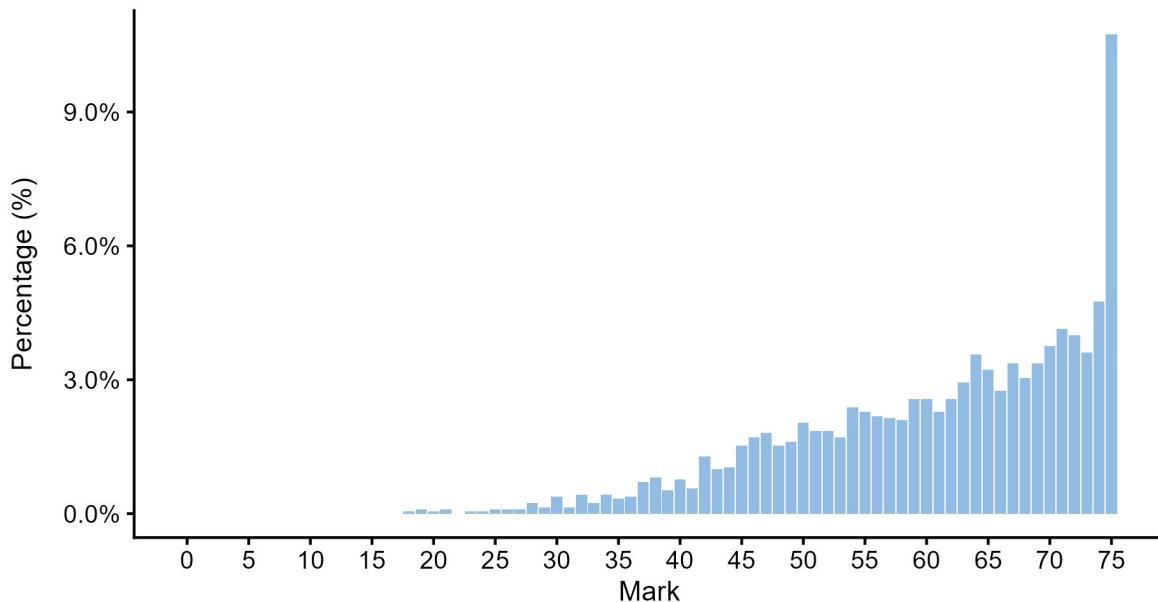
Completion of units	Unit 1	Unit 2	Units 3 and 4
Number of students completed	2,287	2,260	2,089

Units 1 and 2 results

Number of students	Unit 1	Unit 2
Satisfactory	2,217	2,139
Unsatisfactory	70	121

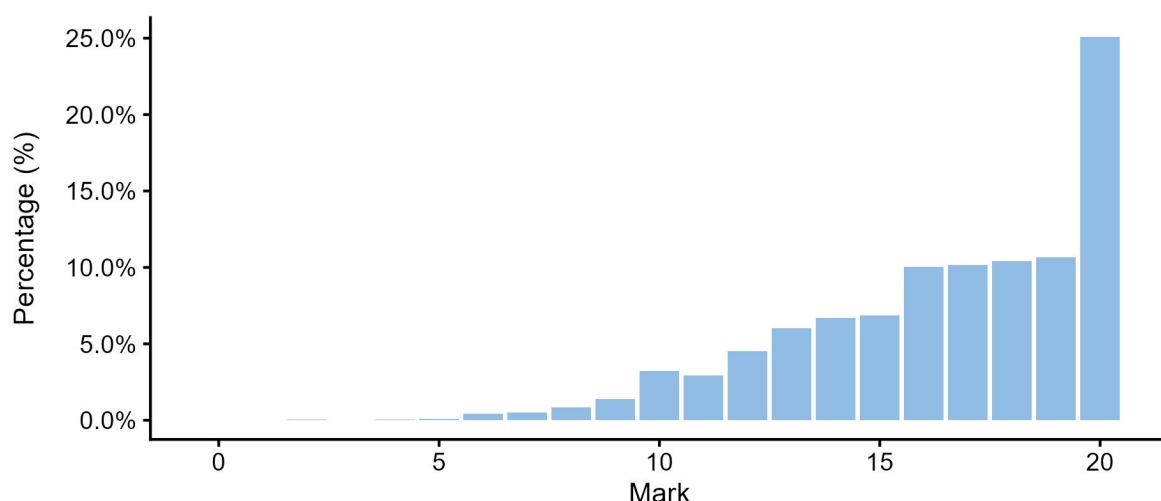
Units 3 and 4 internal assessment (IA) results

Total marks for IA

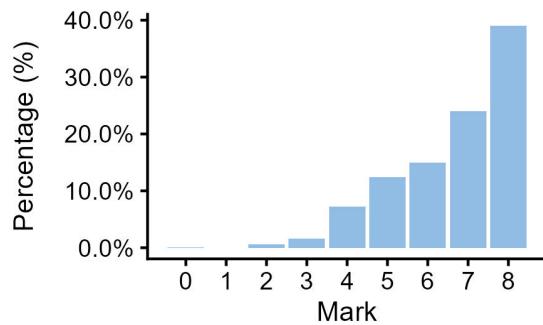


IA1 marks

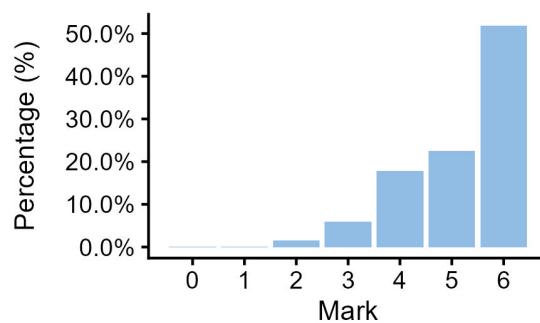
IA1 total



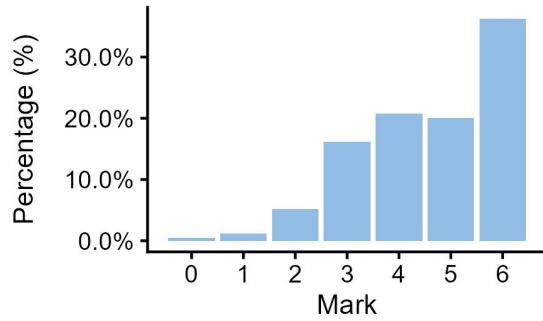
IA1 Criterion: Demonstrating technique



IA1 Criterion: Interpreting music elements and concepts

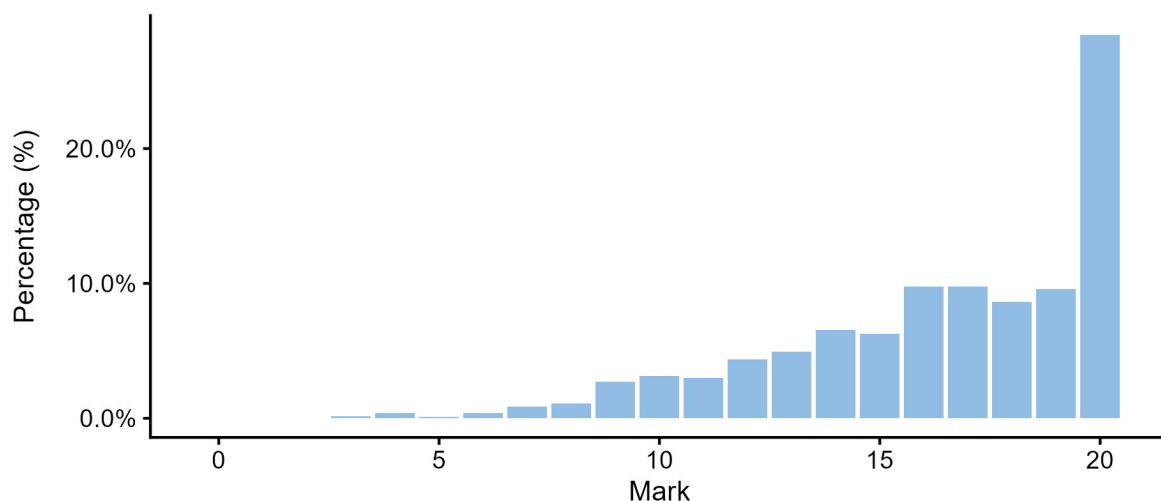


IA1 Criterion: Communicating meaning

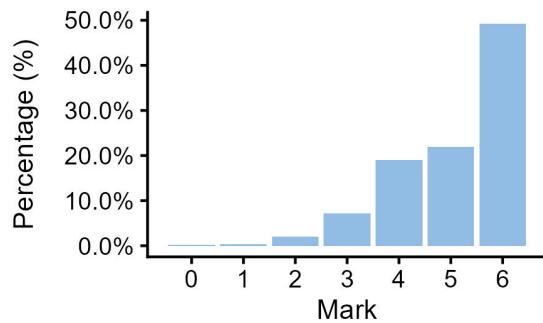


IA2 marks

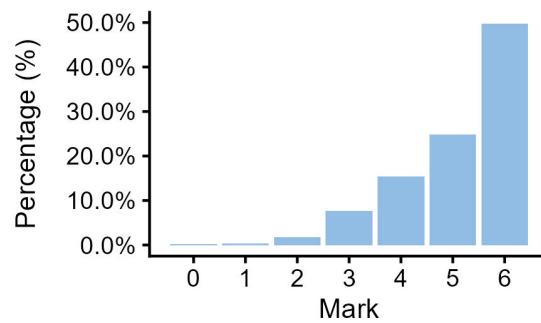
IA2 total



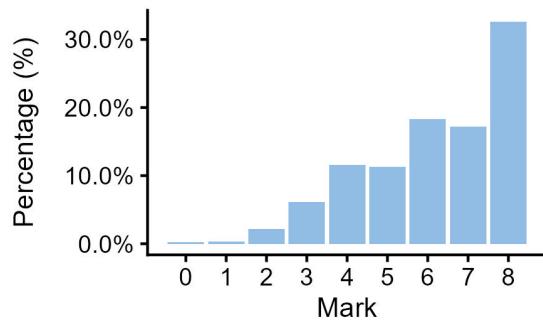
IA2 Criterion: Using music elements and concepts



IA2 Criterion: Applying techniques and processes

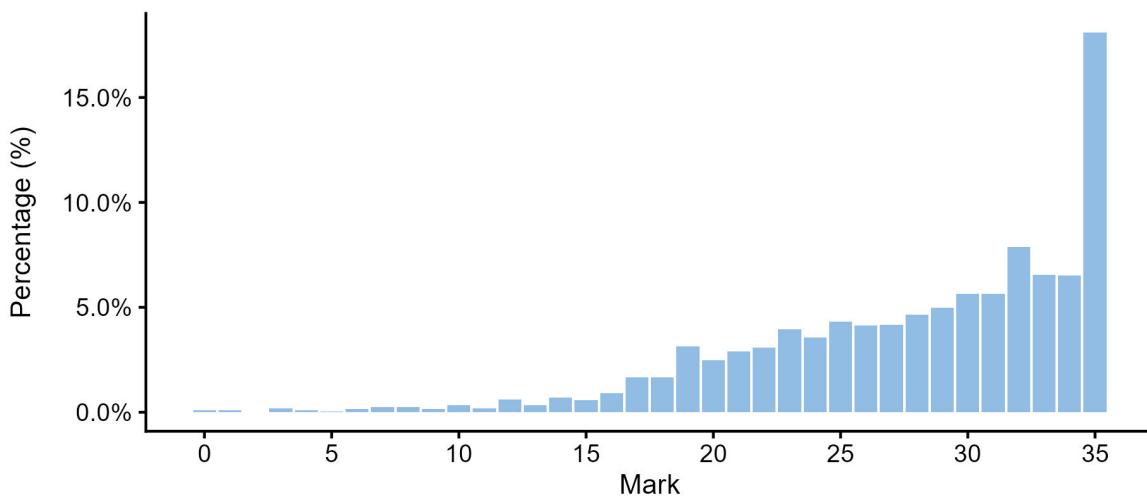


IA2 Criterion: Communicating meaning

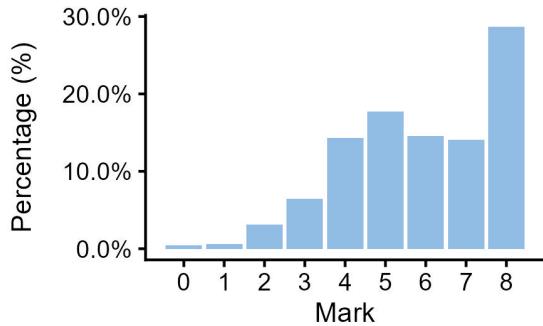


IA3 marks

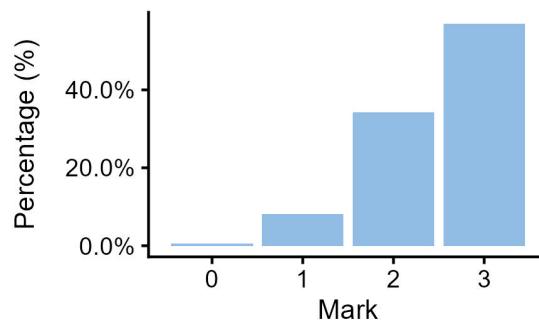
IA3 total



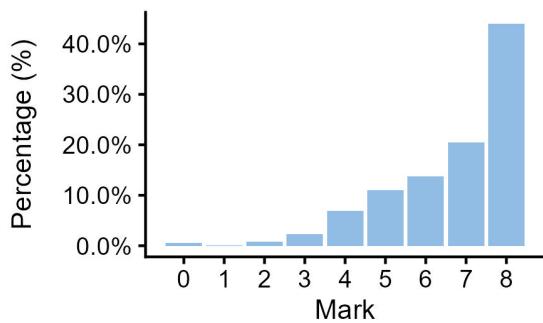
IA3 Criterion: Analysing and evaluating music



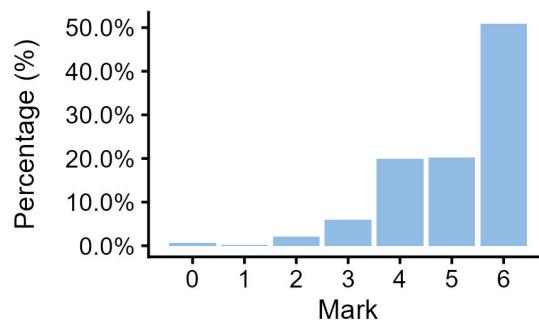
IA3 Criterion: Applying literacy skills



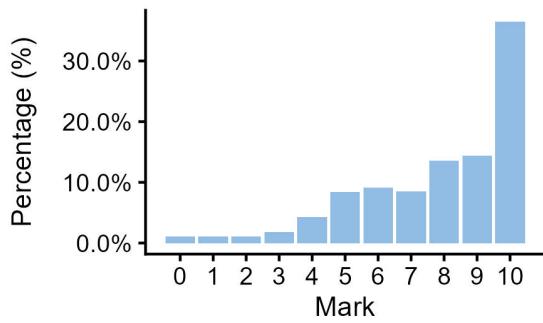
IA3 Criterion: Using music elements and concepts or Demonstrating technique



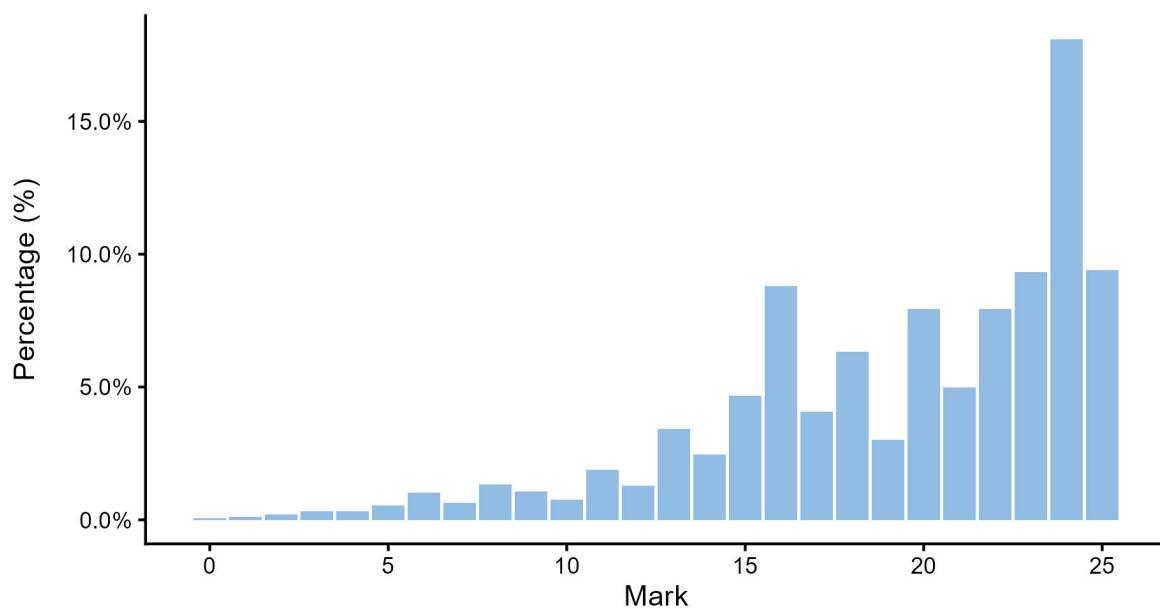
IA3 Criterion: Applying techniques and processes or Interpreting music elements and concepts



IA3 Criterion: Communicating meaning

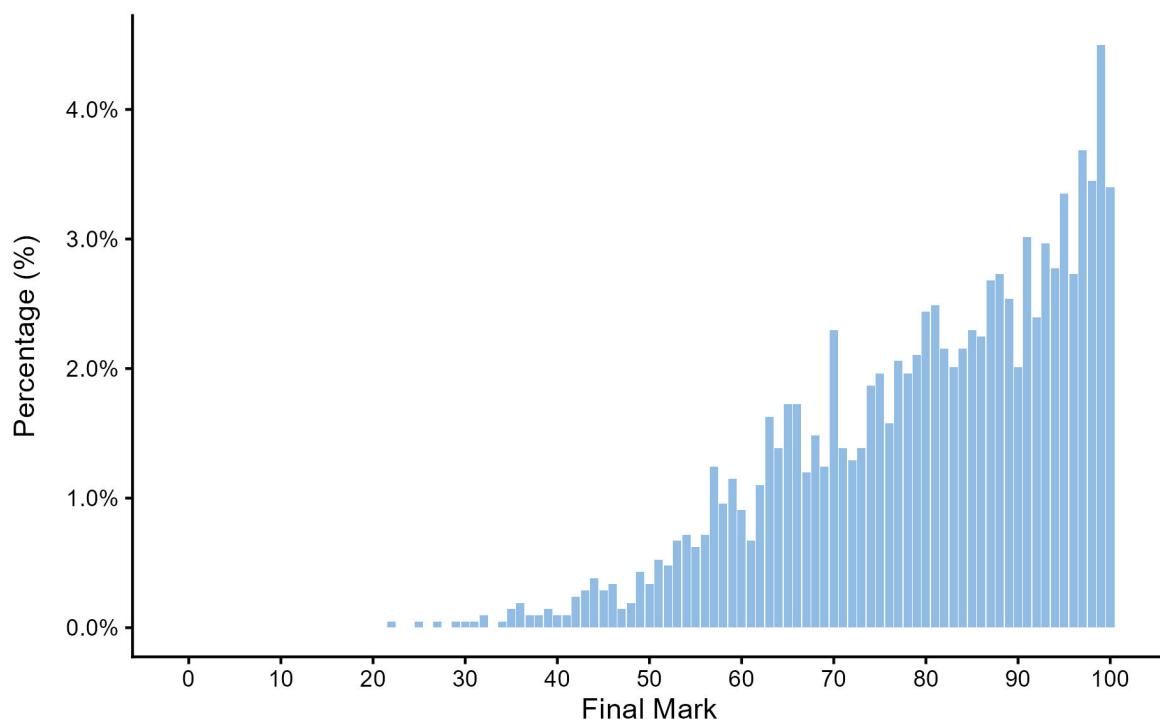


External assessment (EA) marks



Final subject results

Final marks for IA and EA



Grade boundaries

The grade boundaries are determined using a process to compare results on a numeric scale to the reporting standards.

Standard	A	B	C	D	E
Marks achieved	100–87	86–67	66–46	45–17	16–0

Distribution of standards

Number of students who achieved each standard across the state.

Standard	A	B	C	D	E
Number of students	882	786	369	52	0
Percentage of students	42.22	37.63	17.66	2.49	0.00

Internal assessment



This information and advice relate to the assessment design and assessment decisions for each IA in Units 3 and 4. These instruments have undergone quality assurance processes informed by the attributes of quality assessment (validity, accessibility and reliability).

Endorsement

Endorsement is the quality assurance process based on the attributes of validity and accessibility. These attributes are categorised further as priorities for assessment, and each priority can be further broken down into assessment practices.

Data presented in the Assessment design section identifies the reasons why IA instruments were not endorsed at Application 1, by the priority for assessment. An IA may have been identified more than once for a priority for assessment, e.g. it may have demonstrated a misalignment to both the subject matter and the assessment objective/s.

Refer to *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook v7.0*, Section 9.5.

Percentage of instruments endorsed in Application 1

Internal assessment	IA1	IA2	IA3
Number of instruments	276	276	276
Percentage endorsed in Application 1	94	92	75

Confirmation

Confirmation is the quality assurance process based on the attribute of reliability. The QCAA uses provisional criterion marks determined by teachers to identify the samples of student responses that schools are required to submit for confirmation.

Confirmation samples are representative of the school's decisions about the quality of student work in relation to the instrument-specific marking guide (ISMG) and are used to make decisions about the cohort's results.

Refer to *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook v7.0*, Section 9.6.

The following table includes the percentage agreement between the provisional marks and confirmed marks by assessment instrument. The Assessment decisions section for each assessment instrument identifies the agreement trends between provisional and confirmed marks by criterion.

Number of samples reviewed and percentage agreement

IA	Number of schools	Number of samples requested	Number of additional samples requested	Percentage agreement with provisional marks
1	273	1,477	2	92.67
2	273	1,475	0	96.70
3	272	1,454	6	81.99

Internal assessment 1 (IA1)



Performance (20%)

This assessment is the demonstration of a range of cognitive, technical, creative and expressive skills, and the application of theoretical and conceptual understandings through the psychomotor domain (Marzano & Kendall 2007, 2008). It involves students' application of identified skills when communicating meaning.

This assessment occurs over an extended and defined period of time. Students may use class time and their own time to develop a performance.

Assessment design

Validity

Validity in assessment design considers the extent to which an assessment item accurately measures what it is intended to measure and that the evidence of student learning collected from an assessment can be legitimately used for the purpose specified in the syllabus.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Validity priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions
Alignment	13
Authentication	0
Authenticity	1
Item construction	3
Scope and scale	2

Effective practices

Validity priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- contained unique context statements that were relevant to the unit (General syllabus — Unit 3: Innovations or AS — Unit 1: Designs) and offered a meaningful scenario, situation, or inquiry question that resonated with the school context and student experience/s
- provided opportunities for unique responses in a range of styles and genres associated with innovation in music (General syllabus — Unit 3: Innovations) or the way in which music is designed (AS — Unit 1: Designs)
- provided opportunity for students to select repertoire commensurate with their technique and skills
- offered clear alignment between the subject matter and requirements and conditions of the task, with opportunities for students to explore innovations, both pre-1950 and post-1950 (General syllabus — Unit 3: Innovations), as guided by the teacher or through the student's own choice.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- clearly identify all assessment objectives as a list in the task section, titled 'To complete this task, you must', or clearly embed the objectives within the task description
- clarify the distinction between feedback and drafting by providing clear checkpoints as outlined in the *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook v7.0*, Section 8.2.5, e.g.
 - Week 5 — In-class progress check of performance
 - Week 7 — Teacher provides feedback on draft submission
- focus on the repertoire itself, rather than on performing with an innovative approach to instrumental or vocal technique — though these factors may coexist, the task requirements specify the performance of repertoire
- do not unnecessarily repeat information in the scaffolding section that is already contained in the task conditions or description.

Accessibility

Accessibility in assessment design ensures that no student or group of students is disadvantaged in their capacity to access an assessment.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Accessibility priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions
Bias avoidance	0
Language	0
Layout	0
Transparency	0

Effective practices

Accessibility priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- used clear and concise language in the task description
- allowed students to demonstrate a wide range of innovation/s in music from a range of periods, styles and genres, pre- and post-1950 (General syllabus — Unit 3: Innovations).

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- allow students to engage in the depth and breadth of innovative musical styles and genres through the performance of repertoire of both pre- and post-1950 domains (General syllabus — Unit 3: Innovations)
- include clear and explicit instructions and cues in the task description and scaffolding sections explaining what students are required to demonstrate
- do not build qualifiers (e.g. present an *effective* performance) into the task description, as these are contained in the ISMG

- are checked for layout and formatting issues — especially when transferring copied information into the Endorsement application (app) to ensure clarity and accessibility of task information.

Additional advice

When developing an assessment instrument for this IA, it is essential to consider the following key differences between the 2019 and 2025 syllabuses:

- The assessment instrument no longer includes the requirement for a performance statement.
- There is no requirement for the performance to reflect the use of an innovation. The task requires students to perform repertoire.

Assessment decisions

Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which the results of assessments are consistent, replicable and free from error.

Agreement trends between provisional and confirmed marks

Criterion number	Criterion name	Percentage agreement with provisional	Percentage less than provisional	Percentage greater than provisional	Percentage both less and greater than provisional
1	Demonstrating technique	96.34	3.30	0.37	0.00
2	Interpreting music elements and concepts	98.53	1.47	0.00	0.00
3	Communicating meaning	94.87	2.20	2.93	0.00

Effective practices

Reliable judgments were made using the ISMG for this IA when:

- for the Demonstrating technique criterion
 - the recording
 - showed a single, unedited performance
 - used a camera angle that allowed the student's technique to be clearly visible
 - demonstrated a performance that was not duplicated by a backing track or other performers, so that the individual part-work skills of the student could be clearly seen and heard
 - the repertoire gave the student the opportunity to demonstrate technical skills as described in the ISMG
 - at the 5–6 mark performance level, the student clearly demonstrated control of the instrument or sound source, using appropriate technique, in spite of occasional slips

- at the 7–8 mark performance level, the technical skills clearly enabled the student to communicate an accomplished performance
- for the Interpreting music elements and concepts criterion
 - the repertoire enabled the student to demonstrate that music elements and concepts had been manipulated to create a performance in a style. While students are free to perform in any style, it is recommended that teachers encourage students to choose music with clear stylistic characteristics
 - the stylistic characteristics were made clear in the recording
 - at the 4-mark performance level, there was clear evidence of the style
 - at the 5–6 mark performance level, the student had made well-considered personal decisions about the interpretation of the piece
- for the Communicating meaning criterion
 - the repertoire chosen enabled the student to demonstrate performance choices and expressive devices
 - performance choices and expressive devices were clear in the recording
 - the performance statement simply described the performance choices made and how they communicated meaning, without extensive musicological analysis or a discussion of rehearsal strategies
 - the performance statement was only assessed using the descriptors up to 4 marks
 - at the 5–6 mark performance level, effective performance choices and expressive devices were evident throughout the performance.

Practices to strengthen

When making judgments for this IA for the 2025 syllabus, it is essential to consider the following key differences between the ISMGs in the 2019 and 2025 syllabuses:

- For the Demonstrating technique criterion in the 2025 syllabus, the
 - 5–6 mark performance level requires students to clearly demonstrate that they have control of their instrument or sound source, using techniques that are intended for the style and genre
 - 7–8 mark performance level requires students to demonstrate an advanced level of control and precision over their instrument or sound source, with a seamless performance and attention to detail.
- For the Interpreting music elements and concepts criterion in the 2025 syllabus, the
 - focus is on style and genre
 - 2–3 mark performance level requires students to shape music elements and concepts to demonstrate their understanding of genre or style being performed throughout the performance
 - 4–5 mark performance level requires students to make the genre or style immediately apparent throughout the performance
 - 6–7 mark performance level requires students to demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the genre or style, shaping the music in a way that reflects the subtle intricacies of the style.

- The Realising music ideas criterion in the 2025 syllabus replaces the Communicating meaning criterion in the 2019 syllabus. For this criterion, the
 - ISMG relates only to the process of how students bring their ideas to a conclusion in their performance to effectively communicate meaning. There is no longer any assessment of a performance statement in this criterion
 - 3-mark performance level requires students to show evidence of the emotional or thematic content of the music being reinforced through careful choice of expressive devices
 - 4-mark performance level requires students to strengthen and make meaning clearer through the continuous execution of expressive devices
 - 5-mark performance level requires students to demonstrate small musical details that add deeper meaning or feeling to the performance.

Additional advice

It is essential to consider the following key differences between the 2019 and 2025 syllabuses:

- In the 2025 syllabus, a performance statement is no longer required.
- The response length in the 2025 syllabus is up to 5 minutes (revised from 2–3 minutes in the 2019 syllabus). Students may perform repertoire longer than 5 minutes, but teachers will stop marking at 5 minutes.

Schools should also:

- note that students may submit performances of compositions they have submitted for IA2
- encourage students to
 - carefully choose their instrument or sound source to best demonstrate their achievement over time in the course, e.g. if a student chooses to sing and accompany themselves on an instrument, they will expect to demonstrate skill in both singing and playing, as their performance will be judged as a whole. If a student is a better singer than an instrumentalist, they might perform better if they are accompanied by someone else. Similarly, if a student is a better instrumentalist than a singer, they might perform better in the role of accompanist
 - when choosing repertoire that stylistically requires accompaniment, ensure the performance is recorded with accompaniment and not as a monophonic solo
 - choose an appropriate setting and context for their performance. For instance, a popular or rock song would usually be performed from memory, often in a band context or with a recorded backing, while a lieder would usually be performed from memory with an accompanist. By contrast, an instrumental solo may well be performed with sheet music, as this is more common in the style
 - carefully manage the balance between performer and accompaniment, where relevant, so that the performer is supported but still clearly identifiable in the recording
 - when selecting keys for performance, transpose music if it will assist them demonstrate their achievement more appropriately
 - when performing in a duet, trio or ensemble, take care that all members of the group who are being assessed have an equitable opportunity to demonstrate the highest performance-level descriptors across each criterion in the ISMG

- when performing in an ensemble, ensure that each student performs a separate part (not doubling a part played by another performer) and visually and aurally identifiable. Doubling parts played by another performer does not enable the student to demonstrate their musical independence
- clearly and consistently apply school-based assessment policies and procedures for managing response length when making judgments about student responses to assessment. This includes
 - ensuring students are aware of the school-based assessment policy and procedures regarding management of response length.
 - monitoring response length in performance tasks as part of the checkpoint process
 - where student work exceeds the length required, applying the school assessment policy for managing response length. This may include marking only the evidence in the student response that meets the assessment conditions for response length and not marking material that exceeds those conditions. Teachers should indicate the material that was marked in performances by annotating time codes on the ISMG.

Further information about managing assessment response length can be found in the *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook v7.0*, Section 8.2.6

- ensure quality, accuracy and accessibility of the required files (*QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook v7.0*, Section 9.6.3). Recorded evidence should be in MP4 format and be clear and undistorted visually and aurally so that the evidence supporting the marks awarded can be clearly identified. Schools should refer to the *Further confirmation submission advice for internal assessment* resource (available in the Confirmation subsection of the Resources section of the Syllabuses app in the QCAA Portal) for advice on how to convert .avi or .mov files to MP4 format.

Samples

The following excerpts have been included to demonstrate:

- Demonstrating technique at 8 marks, as breath control and dexterity of well-managed semiquavers at 2:31–3:04 demonstrate technical skills that result in a fluent and cohesive performance
- Interpreting music elements and concepts at 6 marks, as phrasing at 0:20–0:48 shows stylistic awareness, and choices made around articulation and ornamentation demonstrate an individualised interpretation
- Communicating meaning at 6 marks, as the performance demonstrates
 - dynamics at 0:08–0:20 that are used to shape phrases and to echo repeated motifs
 - expressive devices that are sustained throughout the performance
- Communicating meaning at 6 marks, as the performance statement
 - in the third paragraph, clearly expresses how performance choices were made to manipulate music elements and to effectively communicate meaning
 - used well-sequenced ideas and effective word choice to clarify meaning. Words such as 'for example' and 'finally' ensured that the statement was easy to follow.

Note: The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s occurred throughout a response.

Excerpt 1



Video content: (3 min, 5 secs)

<https://youtu.be/3Es6Sf8QI4w>

Excerpt 2

For my performance, I will be playing the G. Henle Verlag edition of the Rondo movement from Sonata in B flat major for Bassoon K.292 accompanied by the piano. Composed in 1775 by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, this classical work features a structure of ABACADA. I took inspiration from performances by Pierce Atkins and George Sakakeeny with their different ornamentations, articulations and phrasing. I aim to perform this in the typical light-hearted and joyful mood, at an allegro tempo. To convey this mood and their inspirations I focused on the use of breath control, and articulation and ornamentation.

Breath control was considered to provide clarity and support in order to produce dynamic variation and accuracy in intonation. Due to the long phrases with short rests, quick large breaths were practiced to have enough air to support each phrase with clarity. For example, in section B, there are long semiquaver scalic runs with limited opportunities to breath. To achieve dynamic variation, breath control was also important. For example, at bar 47, there were crescendos and decrescendos. I practiced these individual bars with plenty of air to ensure I was able to achieve dynamic contrast. Finally, breath control was needed to have accurate intonation. Typically, if running short of air, particularly in my tenor register, I squeeze my embouchure and go sharp. I practiced taking deep breaths in these areas of my piece, like in bar 101, to assist in maintaining correct intonation.

Secondly, the articulations and ornamentation, written and unwritten, were carefully practiced, highlighting the joyful mood. For example, in bar 2, there are mordents above the quaver E \flat 4. To have correct style to match classical music, I practiced moving from the above F4 and then quickly to the E \flat 4, D4 and finishing on the Eb4. This ornamentation gives the A section a bouncier feel. To add more interest to *Rondo* and to express my personal style, articulations were changed. To add interest to repeated phrases, especially during the later sections of the movement, slurs are added. For example, when bars 111-114 are repeated, I altered where I was placing the slurs to make the phrases unique, as shown in Figure 1 and 2 in red.

Figure 1: First articulation

A musical score page for orchestra, page 117. The score consists of two staves. The top staff is for the bassoon, showing a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The bottom staff is for the bassoon, with a dynamic instruction 'f' (fortissimo) placed above it. The page number '117' is printed above the staves.

The following excerpts have been included to demonstrate:

- Demonstrating technique at 8 marks, as the performance shows
 - controlled, accurate technique at 0:08–0:45, with appropriate posture at the instrument, secure bowing and facility at the fingerboard enabling accurate intonation across significant pitch leaps, stylistic vibrato and a breadth of tone colour
 - a cohesive and fluent performance
- Interpreting music elements and concepts at 6 marks, as the coda of the piece at 2:33–3:08 is carefully and individually shaped, with thoughtful decisions made about the rhythmic placement of each note in each phrase and the appropriate amount of rubato
- Communicating meaning at 6 marks, as the performance demonstrates
 - dynamics, phrase shaping, vibrato and tone colour from 0:52–2:13, to effectively communicate meaning
 - sustained realisation of music ideas
- Communicating meaning at 6 marks, as the performance statement
 - is logically ordered, starting with a clear statement of meaning and then continuing chronologically through the piece
 - clearly explains performance choices such as ‘tenuto’, ‘slow tempo’, ‘vibrato’, ‘increasing bow speed’ and ‘applying more weight’.

Note: The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s occurred throughout a response.

Excerpt 1



Video content: (3 min, 8 secs)

<https://youtu.be/u2wCiXzzfqw>

Excerpt 2

One of the most famous works in cello repertoire is Elgar's Cello Concerto. Completed in 1919, this concerto possesses a brooding character where Elgar laments the changed world post WWI. In my performance of the third movement, I focused on expressing emotions of longing, reflection, and nostalgia through three main sections.

The opening section (bars 1–25 00:27-1:03) express Elgar's longing for times before WWI. To express this, I maintained a slow tempo and soft dynamics, adhering to the Adagio and piano markings. I used expressive vibrato to create a lyrical tone because *molto espressivo* was written. Octave leaps with crescendo-decrescendo markings (bar 9, bar 11, bar 13) emphasised by controlling bow pressure and increasing vibrato speed, invoking sense of longing.

To build tension throughout the middle section (2:05- 2:35) I emphasised the slurred articulation by using smooth legato technique, sustaining frequent ties across bars with suspensions (e.g. bars 8–9, 11–12, 12–13) to reinforce musical tension. Bar 31 (2:07) is in C-sharp minor, a nostalgic key. It is marked *molto stringendo* and *fortissimo*, I choose to follow expressive markings conveying urgency and intensity as Elgar reflects on fond memories of life before the war by increasing bow speed and applying more weight, intensifying the sound. Throughout the movement, Elgar frequently used tenuto to express his lingering sorrow and deep reflection. I brought this contrast by dynamically shifting from previous section, using rich, sustained tone to enhance passionate character of the passage.

The closing section bar 44-50 (3:00 onwards) resolves musical tension. In the recollection of the theme (3:00-3:27), I used a heavy tone and wide vibrato to express the sombre mood of G minor, reflecting Elgar's mournful acceptance of losing the pre-war Edwardian era. Through these musical choices, I aimed to convey distinct emotions for each section in the movement which expressed Elgar's deep nostalgia and sorrow.

Internal assessment 2 (IA2)



Composition (20%)

This assessment focuses on the output or result of a process that requires the application of a range of cognitive, physical, technical, creative and expressive skills, and theoretical and conceptual understandings.

This assessment occurs over an extended and defined period of time. Students may use class time and their own time to develop a response.

Assessment design

Validity

Validity in assessment design considers the extent to which an assessment item accurately measures what it is intended to measure and that the evidence of student learning collected from an assessment can be legitimately used for the purpose specified in the syllabus.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Validity priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions
Alignment	17
Authentication	1
Authenticity	0
Item construction	3
Scope and scale	1

Effective practices

Validity priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- provided an authentic scenario or context relevant to the school/students, e.g. local composition/songwriting competition, commissioned work, provision of music for local or school-based events
- provided opportunities for students to respond in any style or genre of the unit and, for Unit 3: Innovations, allowed students to explore an innovation
- clearly identified all assessment objectives as a list in the task section, titled 'To complete this task, you must', or clearly embedded the objectives within the task description
- contained considered scaffolding authored by the school and relevant to the iterative and non-linear nature of compositional procedures and practices.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- are contextualised to the respective unit (General syllabus — Unit 3: Innovations or AS — Unit 1: Designs) through the context, task, and scaffolding sections of the assessment instrument
- make clear that students demonstrate an innovation (General syllabus — Unit 3: Innovations)

- instruct students to ‘analyse and evaluate’ the use of music elements and concepts, and compositional devices to communicate the intent in the composition, rather than discussing other musical, contextual or historical features not related to their choices
- do not repeat information listed in the pre-populated sections of the assessment instrument in the scaffolding section.

Accessibility

Accessibility in assessment design ensures that no student or group of students is disadvantaged in their capacity to access an assessment.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Accessibility priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions
Bias avoidance	0
Language	0
Layout	0
Transparency	1

Effective practices

Accessibility priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- used clear and concise language in the task description, identifying
 - each aspect of the task — the composition and the statement of intent
 - the relationship between them
 - the associated assessment objectives
- allowed opportunities for students to compose in any style or genre in the context of innovation (General syllabus — Unit 3: Innovations).

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- provide explicit cues to students concerning the procedures of the task (task and scaffolding sections) and assessment objectives
- are checked for layout and formatting issues (especially when transferring copied information into the Endorsement app), to ensure clarity and accessibility of task information.

Additional advice

When developing an assessment instrument for this IA, it is essential to consider the following key differences between the 2019 and 2025 syllabuses:

- The assessment instrument no longer requires a statement of compositional intent, but rather a statement of intent.
- The statement of intent requires students to ‘analyse and evaluate’ the use of music elements and concepts, and compositional devices to communicate the intent in the composition.

Assessment decisions

Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which the results of assessments are consistent, replicable and free from error.

Agreement trends between provisional and confirmed marks

Criterion number	Criterion name	Percentage agreement with provisional	Percentage less than provisional	Percentage greater than provisional	Percentage both less and greater than provisional
1	Using music elements and concepts	98.17	0.73	1.10	0.00
2	Applying techniques and processes	98.53	0.73	0.73	0.00
3	Communicating meaning	97.80	1.47	0.73	0.00

Effective practices

Reliable judgments were made using the ISMG for this IA when:

- the mode of presentation of the composition enabled students to fully demonstrate the characteristics in the ISMG. Some compositions are better evidenced visually, while some are clearer if a recording is provided, and others are better with both visual and auditory evidence. Students should be encouraged to consider the mode of presentation that will be most effective for their composition
- the style and genre chosen enabled students to demonstrate their ability. Students should be encouraged to consider which styles and genres best match their skills in composition, and which provide opportunities to demonstrate the development of stylistic, cohesive and unified work
- the work submitted was substantially and idiomatically developed, e.g.
 - an instrumental piece where a motif was both repeated and developed
 - a looping composition that was more than simply a collection of loops and, instead, manipulated and developed texture, timbre, pitch, dynamics, rhythm, mixing and effects.
Students should be encouraged to reflect on using the compositional devices listed in the syllabus (2025 syllabus, pp. 11–12)
- for the Using music elements and concepts criterion, at the
 - 4-mark performance level, the style could be easily discerned
 - 5–6 mark performance level, the style was explicit because of the synthesis of music elements and concepts
- for the Applying techniques and processes criterion, at the
 - 4-mark performance level, the music ideas in the work were clearly developed

- 5–6 mark performance level, the piece was cohesive and unified. **Note:** A programmatic, theme and variations, or a through-composed piece might be unified through the repetition of music ideas.

Practices to strengthen

When making judgments for this IA for the 2025 syllabus, it is essential to consider the following key differences between the ISMGs in the 2019 and 2025 syllabuses:

- For the Using music elements and concepts criterion in the 2025 syllabus, the
 - 2–3 mark performance level requires students to reflect the genre/style throughout the composition
 - 4–5 mark performance level requires students to make the style immediately apparent by combining features specific to the genre/style
 - 6–7 mark performance level requires students to demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the genre/style, shaping the music in a way that reflects the subtle intricacies of the style.
- For the Applying compositional devices criterion in the 2025 syllabus, the
 - 3-mark performance level requires students to use devices typical of the genre/style that enable the music ideas to evolve
 - 4-mark performance level requires students to use devices that will create continuity and connection across all sections, creating a smooth and balanced flow
 - 5-mark performance level requires students to demonstrate a seamless combination of devices with attention to detail.
- For the Resolving music ideas criterion in the 2025 syllabus, the
 - 3-mark performance level requires students to demonstrate music ideas that are essential to communicate meaning
 - 4-mark performance level requires students to strengthen and make meaning clearer through the continuous execution of music ideas
 - 5-mark performance level requires students to demonstrate deeper meaning or feeling through small musical details, and thoughtful and deliberate combination of music ideas.
- For the Statement of intent criterion in the 2025 syllabus, the
 - 2-mark performance level requires students to analyse and evaluate music elements and concepts, and compositional devices in the composition, using literacy skills, language conventions and music terminology appropriate to the style
 - 3-mark performance level requires students to
 - analyse a wide range of music elements and concepts, and compositional devices in the composition, providing clear and precise characteristics
 - make thoughtful and considered judgments about the use of music elements and concepts, and compositional devices to communicate their intent in the composition
 - demonstrate their ideas in a logical order with each idea building on the previous one.

To further ensure reliable judgments are made using the ISMG for this IA, it is recommended that:

- students are encouraged to write idiomatically for the instruments and sound sources they use in the context chosen. For instance, it would not usually be stylistic for the piano accompaniment of a popular song to use thick, muddy voiced chords low in the bass, but

the same thick chords might appropriately create meaning in a programmatic piece. Students should be guided by what is typical in the style and what is appropriate for instruments and sound sources in terms of range, tessitura and, if relevant, chord voicing.

Additional advice

It is essential to consider the following key differences between the 2019 and 2025 syllabuses:

- The statement of intent is separately assessed in the 2025 syllabus and requires analysis and evaluation of the use of music elements and concepts, and compositional devices, rather than the simple explanation of music elements and concepts required in the 2019 syllabus.
- In the 2025 syllabus, the composition description requires that students create a composition and devise a statement of intent (General syllabus, p. 35). Arrangements of pre-existing music are not stated in the task description and are no longer acceptable for this task.

Samples

The following excerpts have been included to demonstrate:

- Using music elements and concepts at 6 marks, as
 - the development of texture and swelling of dynamics at bars 1–12, together with the introduction of stylistically typical percussion figures on the snare drum, make the narrative explicit
 - harp-like arpeggiandos on minor 7, major 7, and inverted suspended 6 chords at bars 1–3 create a sense of tense anticipation typical of the style. These aspects, together with the timbre choices, are integrated to make the narrative explicit
- Applying techniques and processes at 6 marks, as
 - idiomatic compositional devices such as cross rhythms, suspensions, and contrast in dynamics and texture develop the work at bars 10–20
 - rhythmic and melodic motifs, as well as the repetition of the chord progression, create unity and cohesion
- Communicating meaning at 8 marks, as the composition demonstrates
 - specific articulations, together with appropriate voicing of suspended chords and careful balancing of dynamics between instruments
 - complex ideas, including counter melodies and ostinatos that have been sensitively synthesised to create the exciting mood described.

Note: The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s occurred throughout a response.

Excerpt 1

Before the Surge

The musical score consists of eight staves, each representing a different instrument. The instruments are: Trumpet in Bb, Trombone, Tuba, Trompan, Percussion, Piano, Violin, and Violoncello. The score is in 2/4 time and Bb major. It includes various dynamic markings such as *f* (forte), *mp* (mezzo-forte), and *sforzando*. The score is divided into sections labeled *Before the Surge*, *1*, *2*, *3*, *4*, *5*, *6*, *7*, *8*, *9*, *10*, *11*, *12*, *13*, *14*, *15*, *16*, *17*, *18*, *19*, *20*, *21*, *22*, *23*, *24*, *25*, *26*, *27*, *28*, *29*, *30*, *31*, *32*, *33*, *34*, *35*, *36*, *37*, *38*, *39*, *40*, *41*, *42*, *43*, *44*, *45*, *46*, *47*, *48*, *49*, *50*, *51*, *52*, *53*, *54*, *55*, *56*, *57*, *58*, *59*, *60*, *61*, *62*, *63*, *64*, *65*, *66*, *67*, *68*, *69*, *70*, *71*, *72*, *73*, *74*, *75*, *76*, *77*, *78*, *79*, *80*, *81*, *82*, *83*, *84*, *85*, *86*, *87*, *88*, *89*, *90*, *91*, *92*, *93*, *94*, *95*, *96*, *97*, *98*, *99*, *100*, *101*, *102*, *103*, *104*, *105*, *106*, *107*, *108*, *109*, *110*, *111*, *112*, *113*, *114*, *115*, *116*, *117*, *118*, *119*, *120*, *121*, *122*, *123*, *124*, *125*, *126*, *127*, *128*, *129*, *130*, *131*, *132*, *133*, *134*, *135*, *136*, *137*, *138*, *139*, *140*, *141*, *142*, *143*, *144*, *145*, *146*, *147*, *148*, *149*, *150*, *151*, *152*, *153*, *154*, *155*, *156*, *157*, *158*, *159*, *160*, *161*, *162*, *163*, *164*, *165*, *166*, *167*, *168*, *169*, *170*, *171*, *172*, *173*, *174*, *175*, *176*, *177*, *178*, *179*, *180*, *181*, *182*, *183*, *184*, *185*, *186*, *187*, *188*, *189*, *190*, *191*, *192*, *193*, *194*, *195*, *196*, *197*, *198*, *199*, *200*, *201*, *202*, *203*, *204*, *205*, *206*, *207*, *208*, *209*, *210*, *211*, *212*, *213*, *214*, *215*, *216*, *217*, *218*, *219*, *220*, *221*, *222*, *223*, *224*, *225*, *226*, *227*, *228*, *229*, *230*, *231*, *232*, *233*, *234*, *235*, *236*, *237*, *238*, *239*, *240*, *241*, *242*, *243*, *244*, *245*, *246*, *247*, *248*, *249*, *250*, *251*, *252*, *253*, *254*, *255*, *256*, *257*, *258*, *259*, *260*, *261*, *262*, *263*, *264*, *265*, *266*, *267*, *268*, *269*, *270*, *271*, *272*, *273*, *274*, *275*, *276*, *277*, *278*, *279*, *280*, *281*, *282*, *283*, *284*, *285*, *286*, *287*, *288*, *289*, *290*, *291*, *292*, *293*, *294*, *295*, *296*, *297*, *298*, *299*, *300*, *301*, *302*, *303*, *304*, *305*, *306*, *307*, *308*, *309*, *310*, *311*, *312*, *313*, *314*, *315*, *316*, *317*, *318*, *319*, *320*, *321*, *322*, *323*, *324*, *325*, *326*, *327*, *328*, *329*, *330*, *331*, *332*, *333*, *334*, *335*, *336*, *337*, *338*, *339*, *340*, *341*, *342*, *343*, *344*, *345*, *346*, *347*, *348*, *349*, *350*, *351*, *352*, *353*, *354*, *355*, *356*, *357*, *358*, *359*, *360*, *361*, *362*, *363*, *364*, *365*, *366*, *367*, *368*, *369*, *370*, *371*, *372*, *373*, *374*, *375*, *376*, *377*, *378*, *379*, *380*, *381*, *382*, *383*, *384*, *385*, *386*, *387*, *388*, *389*, *390*, *391*, *392*, *393*, *394*, *395*, *396*, *397*, *398*, *399*, *400*, *401*, *402*, *403*, *404*, *405*, *406*, *407*, *408*, *409*, *410*, *411*, *412*, *413*, *414*, *415*, *416*, *417*, *418*, *419*, *420*, *421*, *422*, *423*, *424*, *425*, *426*, *427*, *428*, *429*, *430*, *431*, *432*, *433*, *434*, *435*, *436*, *437*, *438*, *439*, *440*, *441*, *442*, *443*, *444*, *445*, *446*, *447*, *448*, *449*, *450*, *451*, *452*, *453*, *454*, *455*, *456*, *457*, *458*, *459*, *460*, *461*, *462*, *463*, *464*, *465*, *466*, *467*, *468*, *469*, *470*, *471*, *472*, *473*, *474*, *475*, *476*, *477*, *478*, *479*, *480*, *481*, *482*, *483*, *484*, *485*, *486*, *487*, *488*, *489*, *490*, *491*, *492*, *493*, *494*, *495*, *496*, *497*, *498*, *499*, *500*, *501*, *502*, *503*, *504*, *505*, *506*, *507*, *508*, *509*, *510*, *511*, *512*, *513*, *514*, *515*, *516*, *517*, *518*, *519*, *520*, *521*, *522*, *523*, *524*, *525*, *526*, *527*, *528*, *529*, *530*, *531*, *532*, *533*, *534*, *535*, *536*, *537*, *538*, *539*, *540*, *541*, *542*, *543*, *544*, *545*, *546*, *547*, *548*, *549*, *550*, *551*, *552*, *553*, *554*, *555*, *556*, *557*, *558*, *559*, *560*, *561*, *562*, *563*, *564*, *565*, *566*, *567*, *568*, *569*, *570*, *571*, *572*, *573*, *574*, *575*, *576*, *577*, *578*, *579*, *580*, *581*, *582*, *583*, *584*, *585*, *586*, *587*, *588*, *589*, *590*, *591*, *592*, *593*, *594*, *595*, *596*, *597*, *598*, *599*, *600*, *601*, *602*, *603*, *604*, *605*, *606*, *607*, *608*, *609*, *610*, *611*, *612*, *613*, *614*, *615*, *616*, *617*, *618*, *619*, *620*, *621*, *622*, *623*, *624*, *625*, *626*, *627*, *628*, *629*, *630*, *631*, *632*, *633*, *634*, *635*, *636*, *637*, *638*, *639*, *640*, *641*, *642*, *643*, *644*, *645*, *646*, *647*, *648*, *649*, *650*, *651*, *652*, *653*, *654*, *655*, *656*, *657*, *658*, *659*, *660*, *661*, *662*, *663*, *664*, *665*, *666*, *667*, *668*, *669*, *670*, *671*, *672*, *673*, *674*, *675*, *676*, *677*, *678*, *679*, *680*, *681*, *682*, *683*, *684*, *685*, *686*, *687*, *688*, *689*, *690*, *691*, *692*, *693*, *694*, *695*, *696*, *697*, *698*, *699*, *700*, *701*, *702*, *703*, *704*, *705*, *706*, *707*, *708*, *709*, *710*, *711*, *712*, *713*, *714*, *715*, *716*, *717*, *718*, *719*, *720*, *721*, *722*, *723*, *724*, *725*, *726*, *727*, *728*, *729*, *730*, *731*, *732*, *733*, *734*, *735*, *736*, *737*, *738*, *739*, *740*, *741*, *742*, *743*, *744*, *745*, *746*, *747*, *748*, *749*, *750*, *751*, *752*, *753*, *754*, *755*, *756*, *757*, *758*, *759*, *760*, *761*, *762*, *763*, *764*, *765*, *766*, *767*, *768*, *769*, *770*, *771*, *772*, *773*, *774*, *775*, *776*, *777*, *778*, *779*, *780*, *781*, *782*, *783*, *784*, *785*, *786*, *787*, *788*, *789*, *790*, *791*, *792*, *793*, *794*, *795*, *796*, *797*, *798*, *799*, *800*, *801*, *802*, *803*, *804*, *805*, *806*, *807*, *808*, *809*, *810*, *811*, *812*, *813*, *814*, *815*, *816*, *817*, *818*, *819*, *820*, *821*, *822*, *823*, *824*, *825*, *826*, *827*, *828*, *829*, *830*, *831*, *832*, *833*, *834*, *835*, *836*, *837*, *838*, *839*, *840*, *841*, *842*, *843*, *844*, *845*, *846*, *847*, *848*, *849*, *850*, *851*, *852*, *853*, *854*, *855*, *856*, *857*, *858*, *859*, *860*, *861*, *862*, *863*, *864*, *865*, *866*, *867*, *868*, *869*, *870*, *871*, *872*, *873*, *874*, *875*, *876*, *877*, *878*, *879*, *880*, *881*, *882*, *883*, *884*, *885*, *886*, *887*, *888*, *889*, *890*, *891*, *892*, *893*, *894*, *895*, *896*, *897*, *898*, *899*, *900*, *901*, *902*, *903*, *904*, *905*, *906*, *907*, *908*, *909*, *910*, *911*, *912*, *913*, *914*, *915*, *916*, *917*, *918*, *919*, *920*, *921*, *922*, *923*, *924*, *925*, *926*, *927*, *928*, *929*, *930*, *931*, *932*, *933*, *934*, *935*, *936*, *937*, *938*, *939*, *940*, *941*, *942*, *943*, *944*, *945*, *946*, *947*, *948*, *949*, *950*, *951*, *952*, *953*, *954*, *955*, *956*, *957*, *958*, *959*, *960*, *961*, *962*, *963*, *964*, *965*, *966*, *967*, *968*, *969*, *970*, *971*, *972*, *973*, *974*, *975*, *976*, *977*, *978*, *979*, *980*, *981*, *982*, *983*, *984*, *985*, *986*, *987*, *988*, *989*, *990*, *991*, *992*, *993*, *994*, *995*, *996*, *997*, *998*, *999*, *1000*.

Video content: (2 min, 13 secs)

<https://youtu.be/5SmTMjxYdII>

Excerpt 2

My orchestral composition *Before the Surge* portrays adventurous, heroic and epic themes. It's designed to take the listener on a journey by employing an array of textural devices, rhythmic contrast and varying dynamics. The instrumental combination used is innovative, as it builds on a small string ensemble, adding three separate percussion parts, selective brass and a piano. This allows for rich layering, unique timbres, and independent rhythms that combine to create unique and textured sounds. The piece aims to convey a bold and powerful mood.

The composition is composed in E natural minor, featuring a chord progression of Em7–Cmaj7–G6–D (i⁷–VI⁷–III⁶(add6)–VII). This progression combines the emotional depth of the minor tonality with complex harmonic possibilities. Incorporating seventh chords and added-sixth chords brings harmonic richness by infusing subtle tension into each chord. This elevates the cinematic and epic nature of this piece.

Dynamics are used purposefully to separate layers and independent parts, instead of only relying on crescendos applied to the entire ensemble. For example, in bars 5–12, the strings transition from *(mp)* to *(mf)* while the Percussion crescendo to build intensity. By bar 23, Percussion III delivers loud cymbal crashes *(ff)*, while the strings decrease to a softer volume *(mp)*. This variation in dynamics results in a sense of dynamic tension and contributes to the adventurous and innovative heroic theme that the piece aims to achieve. In bar 32, an abrupt shift across the whole score to piano *(p)* highlights the piano and lower strings, further adding to the emotional complexity of the composition.

Using a 4/4 time signature and a moderate tempo of $J = 65$ bpm, the layering of rhythms and specific placement of accents heightens the dramatic nature of the piece. The piano incorporates off-beat ostinatos across bars 9–20, while the percussion introduces buzz rolls and demi-semi quaver rhythms in bars 13–20. The strings come in with extended, sustained notes, providing a striking contrast to the busy piano score. Across the majority of parts, bars 21–26 display overlapping and conflicting rhythms that contribute to an increased sense of tension and help build to the climax. In bars 29–30, all the musical elements converge, creating a feeling of resolution.

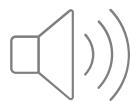
Unconventional instrumentation, thoughtful notation of expressive devices, clear tonal design and rhythmic contrast successfully delivers an innovative composition. All musical elements help to build towards a bold, powerful character and leave a strong final impression on the listener.

The following excerpts have been included to demonstrate:

- Using music elements and concepts at 6 marks, as
 - the style is made explicit at 0:17–0:58, using stylistic timbres with appropriate tonal and melodic choices
 - reversed ambient leads centred on Bb work with faded distorted guitar riffs based on Bb and F against a predominantly Gb bass riff, which results in the F in the guitar riff acting as a major 7th suspension above the bass
 - the contrasting Bb minor arpeggio at 0:58, using the reverse ambient lead sound above the descending bass riff starting at 1:18 (i.e. Gb, Ab, G, F, Eb, Db) makes the melodic metal style explicit

- Applying compositional devices at 6 marks, as
 - rhythmic ornamentation and development of the bass riff at 0:25 can be heard
 - augmentation of the drum pattern at 1:01 effectively supports the change of mood and complements the arpeggiated Bb minor arpeggio
 - texture is developed with the addition of the distorted guitar riff at 1:18
 - development is evident in the drum pattern with the addition of idiomatic drum fills at 1:59–2:14
 - the use of varied rondo form and the adoption of a Bb tonal centre, which begins and ends the piece, creates unity
- Communicating meaning at 8 marks, as the composition demonstrates
 - form used to support the communication of the narrative at 2:34 with the adoption of the Bb C Ab riff signalling victory over pain
 - the use of the tension of the flattened 7th of the tonic in the riff to sensitively communicate that, while the pain is over, it is not forgotten
 - sensitivity at 2:17, when an isolated, gentle, ride cymbal hit creates a moment of uncertainty amongst the dominance of the distorted guitar
 - a synthesis of complex music ideas, through the organisation of tonal clusters and motifs, and the sophisticated use of timbres and textures
- Communicating meaning at 8 marks, as the statement of compositional intent
 - uses appropriate language of the style and genre, with terms such as 'reversed ambient leads', and 'overdriven guitars', together with music terminology such as 'motif' and 'contrast'
 - is logically sequenced and explains the elements and concepts used following the chronology of the piece. The sentence structures used are effective and enhance the communication of meaning.

Note: The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s occurred throughout a response.

Excerpt 1

Audio content: (3 min, 7 secs)

<https://youtu.be/XXPOF3CYBkI>

Excerpt 2

The intent of my composition, titled Ascension, is to represent this picture, where a person is seen being watched beginning their final ascent from a broken world (represented by the storm clouds and river) to paradise, or heaven (represented by the staircase, flowers, sunlight, and blue sky). I used a multitude of both musical elements and compositional devices to enhance the imagery created by the music. I juxtaposed two main sounds – peaceful ambient leads and downturned overdriven guitar with big drums – allowing the listener to view the picture and draw on their personal experiences of sadness for losing someone but gladness that their pain and suffering has ended for good.

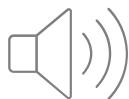
I was inspired by melodic metalcore bands like Canehill and Spiritbox, and used ambience, low tuning for the guitars, and slow yet detailed drum patterns which helped me to portray my intended meaning of sadness and thankfulness for overcoming pain. My piece opens with an introduction created by using reversed ambient leads and faded overdriven guitars to foreshadow the main riffs in the piece. My song has purposely been composed using an A B A C D structure as section A acts as a recurring motif to bring familiarity and continuity to my piece and reinforces the intended meaning of my song. The B section at 1:00 can be described as a more peaceful section as the lack of overdriven guitars makes this apparent. This section also creates a clear contrast which communicates the other feeling of the ascension to heaven as opposed to their despair and pain. The C section at 2:16 acts as the turning point for the character as the dissonance used at the end of the phrase creates suspense and shows anger which is then resolved at 2:32 when the chord progression changes, signifying that the person has ascended and the watcher is glad their pain is over. The ambient leads in this section also create dissonance while still keeping that peaceful tone which shows how both contrasts work with each other to link the meanings of my piece. The drum purposely playing every quarter note ‘opens up’ the soundscape and making the listener think of paradise and how in the photo the person watching is breaking down before coming to realization. Finally, The upbeat drums in section D at 2:32 communicate the meaning of the watcher being glad than their pain has gone and that the person has ascended up into heaven.

The following excerpts have been included to demonstrate:

- Using music elements and concepts at 6 marks, as
 - the country-style harmonic simplicity of the Bb, Gm, Eb, F progression initiates the piece
 - impressionistic and country music styles at 0:08–0:47 are synthesised innovatively when the short, impressionistic motifs on piano, typical of impressionism, are joined by the country timbre of the steel-string guitar
 - the impressionistic characteristic of added note chords is present in the added 9th in the melodic motifs in piano, glockenspiel and guitar

- Applying techniques and processes at 6 marks, as the
 - ternary form (with the A section at 0:08–0:47, the B section from 0:47, and the A section returning from 1:12) gives a sense of unity to the piece, which reinforces the harmonic underpinning of the chord progression
 - work is developed with the idiomatic addition of an appropriate drum pattern from 0:33 and the chordal piano riff at 0:44. The repetition of music ideas throughout the composition creates a unified and cohesive work
- Communicating meaning at 8 marks, as the composition demonstrates
 - sensitive synthesis of complex music ideas to communicate the setting, e.g. the unusual timbre combination of glockenspiel and steel-string guitar at 0:14–0:33 that establishes both the country location and the innocence of students
 - the use of a gentle rim shot in the drum part at 0:34 to sensitively support the guitar riff, while the fuller drum pattern at 0:47 complements the piano chordal riffs to develop the narrative
 - the rallentando at 1:39 preparing the final guitar arpeggio at 1:43 to provide a sense of reflection and resolution to the piece
- Communicating meaning at 8 marks, as the statement of compositional intent
 - clearly conveys the meaning to be communicated at the start of the statement to assist with clarity of expression
 - uses relevant terminology, e.g. 'form', 'legato syncopated notes'
 - is sequenced in accordance with the form of the work, to enhance the cohesion of the communication.

Note: The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s occurred throughout a response.

Excerpt 1

Audio content: (1 min, 56 secs)

<https://youtu.be/lyBnhbHPTkY>

Excerpt 2

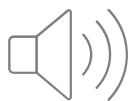
Harmonies of Hope explores the [REDACTED] outdoor deck, where students engage with the inspirational environment. The piece follows an ABA form, utilising impressionist characteristics to express atmosphere and tone colour, combined with country-style techniques to reflect the energy of this place. In the intro, large intervals and wide-ranging notes form a wavy melodic contour, symbolising the broad scope of cultural exchange among students and staff. The glockenspiel's sharp, light sound symbolises clarity and inspiration, evoking a sense of possibility that offers students room for creativity. The I-IV-V chord progression is used in the A sections, which is common in country music and creates a consonant harmony. This symbolises the friendly atmosphere in which students interact and the peaceful Australian nature of this place. In bars 8-11, light percussion is introduced at mezzo-piano with a strong, steady beat, enhancing the lively mood as the piece moves towards section B, where the determined teamwork creates a contrast of intensity. In bars 13-16, legato syncopated notes on the treble clef create a smooth, flowing melody. This impressionism technique symbolises fluid thought and steady momentum as the students begin to act on their motivation. The chromaticism within the chord progression in the bass clef with the extended 7th and 9th chords adds a sense of tension and dissonance, reflecting student's grinds while pursuing their goals. Throughout section B, the muted electric guitar's constant 16th note strumming, paired with the ascending and descending bassline, creates an energetic rhythm that propels the piece forward. This country music technique signifies the continuous support and care provided to the students, helping them stay focused on their journey. In bar 20, the staccato articulation and accent on the final notes represent a final push toward success. In the second A section, the texture becomes thinner, with the homophonic melody using more single notes and arpeggiated patterns with fewer chords, reflecting that no matter the challenges, the [REDACTED] provides a shelter of hope, offering students peace where their minds can find tranquillity again. The rhythmic ostinato in the bass clef and short, repetitive notes of the electric guitar in bars 25-28 reinforce the continuity of the collaborative culture at the [REDACTED], supporting the students as they transition from school to life beyond it. In conclusion, this composition captures the cultural inspiration, collaborative energy, and constant support that drives students toward success at the [REDACTED]

The following excerpts have been included to demonstrate:

- Using music elements and concepts at 6 marks, as
 - typical music elements of the tarantella have been synthesised to make the style and genre explicit. At 0:08–0:19, the fast tempo, minor tonality, harmonic rhythm, running quaver rhythms and repeated melodic motifs work together to represent the Southern Italian folk dance
 - the four-bar melodic motifs resonate with the formal nature of movement involved in Italian folk dancing
 - the dance genre origins of the style are represented in the form, where the A section at 0:08–1:07 is in ternary form, with clear eight-bar phrases beginning in E minor, then modulating to G major at 0:19, and then returning to E minor at 0:31
- Applying techniques and processes at 6 marks, as
 - the ternary form of the piece (with the A section at 0:08–1:07, the B section at 1:07–1:59, and the return of the developed A section with a clear coda) creates unity and cohesion
 - the work is developed using idiomatic compositional devices such as motivic development, when the running quaver motif is first heard at 0:08–0:11, then developed at 0:11–0:14

- contrast is used at 0:55, when the melody and harmony are swapped, and the melody is taken by the left hand of the piano and modulated up a semitone into F minor
- contrast is used in the B section at 1:07–1:59, where the original jump bass is replaced by repeated chord accompaniment in the relative Ab major key, at a slower tempo
- voice leading and harmonisation are used to cohesively change the tonal centre as the piece develops at 1:40–1:59, where a Bb major chord, acting as the subdominant of F major, is followed by B diminished chord, which then undertakes a dominant harmonic function to prepare for the final key of the piece, C minor
- Communicating meaning at 8 marks, as the composition demonstrates
 - complex music ideas communicating meaning with sensitivity, with fast tempos, short rhythms, running melodic patterns, and detached articulations at 2:23–2:29 convincingly representing the movement of a spider
 - sensitivity in the B section at 1:07–1:59 where the changes in tempo, rhythm, dynamics, articulation, accompaniment pattern, melodic motifs, keys and harmonies evoke the spider calmly spinning its web and awaiting its prey
 - well-voiced chords, appropriate ranges and pianistic writing employed to exploit the capabilities of the instrument and enhance the communication of meaning
- Communicating meaning at 8 marks, as the statement of compositional intent
 - is logically organised into well-structured paragraphs
 - features topic sentences that state the meaning being communicated in each paragraph to enhance clarity
 - uses relevant music terminology to explain the musical decisions of the composer to evoke the intended mood and meaning
 - uses verbs (e.g. 'mimic', 'reflected', 'conveyed') to assist in effectively explaining the composer's musical decisions.

Note: The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s occurred throughout a response.

Excerpt 1

Audio content: (2 min, 36 secs)

<https://youtu.be/-rSHwiJPFUw>

Excerpt 2

This tarantella's quick tempo, rhythmic drive, and dynamic articulation effectively conveys the energy of a spider. The composition, which is written in a fast 12/8 meter, which is typical of traditional Italian tarantellas, conveys a sense of continuous motion and agility akin to a spider's swift, darting movements. A constant run of semi-quaver figures permeates the composition, creating a restless, skittering energy.

In order to mimic the erratic scuttling of a spider across its web, these figures frequently leap across intervals (e.g. bars 25 and 27). The sharp articulation and staccato markings give the texture a lightness and nimbleness, while the quick pitch and register changes (e.g. bars 25-29) reflect the spider's quick direction changes. Through frequent modulations (E minor - G Major - E minor - F minor - Ab Major - C minor) and sequences (e.g. bars 3 and 4), the composition avoids static and maintains forward momentum harmonically.

A spider's incessant activity, whether it be spinning, hunting, or patrolling its web, is reflected in this steady, harmonic movement. A spider's sudden strikes or retreats are mimicked by sudden dynamic contrasts, such as sudden shifts from piano to forte (e.g. bars 43 and 59). The careful, mechanical nature of web construction is conveyed by repetitive rhythmic motifs, especially the recurrent ostinato patterns and driving dotted rhythms. Using ascending or descending sequences that circle back on themselves, melodic lines can occasionally mimic spinning or spiralling patterns, representing the circular structure of a web (main theme, bars 1-4).

In its entirety, the work presents the spider as a figure of grace, accuracy, and vitality rather than as a menacing creature. Similar to the spider's dexterity, the tarantella's technical requirements call for the performer to possess agility and control, just like the creature it aims to mimic.

Internal assessment 3 (IA3)



Integrated project (35%)

This assessment focuses on a problem-solving process that requires the application of a range of cognitive, technical and creative skills, and theoretical understandings. The response is a coherent work that includes composing or performing, and musicology, and documents the iterative process undertaken to develop a solution in response to a stimulus.

This assessment occurs over an extended and defined period of time. Students may use class time and their own time to develop their project.

Assessment design

Validity

Validity in assessment design considers the extent to which an assessment item accurately measures what it is intended to measure and that the evidence of student learning collected from an assessment can be legitimately used for the purpose specified in the syllabus.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Validity priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions
Alignment	47
Authentication	7
Authenticity	1
Item construction	13
Scope and scale	25

Effective practices

Validity priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- explicitly included all assessment objectives relevant to the respective assessment technique (musicology and composition, or musicology and performance), as a list in the task section, entitled 'To complete this task, you must', or clearly embedded the objectives within the task description
- clearly instructed students to 'analyse and evaluate' music repertoire to justify a viewpoint related to the expressive powers of music
- considered the scope and scale of the musicology component, recommending that, in the development of their viewpoint and subsequent analysis and evaluation, students focus on no more than two of
 - setting (time or place)
 - characterisation
 - drama and/or action
 - mood or atmosphere

- employed considered checkpoint sequences and scaffolding that reflected the nature of the project workflow, specifically that the musicological component precedes the composition or performance (as the musicological investigation, informs, guides, and shapes the performance or composition).

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- contain task descriptions that clearly identify both the musicology and composition/performance components of the project, and their relationship, which shows the development of the creative work from the musicological investigation
- specify that identity can include personal, social, political, or cultural aspects for the musicological investigation for AS — Unit 2: Identities.

Accessibility

Accessibility in assessment design ensures that no student or group of students is disadvantaged in their capacity to access an assessment.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Accessibility priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions
Bias avoidance	0
Language	0
Layout	0
Transparency	1

Effective practices

Accessibility priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- provided clear and concise task descriptions that assisted students to engage with the task
- made the assessment objectives of each component clear, i.e. musicology component and composition/performance component
- provided clear scaffolding and considered checkpoints relating to each component to assist students to realise or resolve each component of the project.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- share the same or similar contexts and comparable task descriptions (in terms of length and language use) for each of the two assessment techniques. This ensures accessibility and equity between students completing the different assessment techniques
- are checked for layout and formatting issues (especially when transferring copied information into the Endorsement app). This enhances accessibility of task information
- provide explicit instruction and cues to students about the procedures of the two assessment techniques and what they are required to demonstrate in each
- provide the same scaffolding in the musicology component for each of the two instruments.

Additional advice

When developing an assessment instrument for this IA, it is essential to consider the following key differences between the 2019 and 2025 syllabuses:

- The IA3 assessment instrument now comprises two complete responses that are connected to the same topic, rather than one integrated submission. Students develop a musicological response that investigates a topic relating to narrative (General syllabus — Unit 3: Innovations) or identity (AS — Unit 1: Designs), and then create a composition or perform repertoire that is informed by the findings of the musicological response.
- There is no requirement for a statement of intent or performance statement.
- Students may provide a program note as supporting evidence that assists audience understanding of meaning in the composition. The program note will not form an assessable component of the task.

Assessment decisions

Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which the results of assessments are consistent, replicable and free from error.

Agreement trends between provisional and confirmed marks

Criterion number	Criterion name	Percentage agreement with provisional	Percentage less than provisional	Percentage greater than provisional	Percentage both less and greater than provisional
1	Analysing and evaluating music	87.13	12.50	0.37	0.00
2	Applying literacy skills	93.38	5.51	1.10	0.00
3	Using music elements and concepts	98.90	1.10	0.00	0.00
4	Applying techniques and processes	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
5	Communicating meaning	97.79	1.84	0.37	0.00

Effective practices

Reliable judgments were made using the ISMG for this IA when:

- for the Analysing and evaluating music criterion, marks were allocated where students
 - analysed and evaluated repertoire from the mandated categories of film music, television music, video game music, music theatre, opera or program music
 - chose highly relevant key moments in their chosen repertoire
 - analysed repertoire in detail, considering depth and breadth, ‘with attention to the fine points’

- provided excerpts of audio and/or visual evidence of their analytical findings
 - demonstrated the interplay of the music elements in the chosen key moments, rather than discussing music elements individually and generally across the work
- for the Applying literacy skills criterion
 - at the 2-mark performance level, the response
 - employed the typical language conventions used for music analysis and evaluation
 - showed evidence of referencing conventions, such as in-text referencing or reference lists using recognised referencing protocols
 - used music terminology that was appropriate to the style, context and genre to demonstrate student expertise in their chosen field of study
 - was a coherent work, where the analysis and evaluation provided the background for, and informed, the performance or composition
 - at the 3-mark performance level, the structure and sequencing of ideas made the response clear and easy to understand
- for the Using music elements and concepts criterion
 - students were assessed on their own use of music elements and concepts
 - at the 7-mark performance level, the narrative was made clear
- for the Applying techniques and processes criterion
 - at the 5-mark performance level, the work was unified
 - at the 4-mark performance level, the work showed the development of appropriate compositional devices
- for the Demonstrating technique criterion at the 7–8 mark performance level, the performance was technically authoritative
- for the Interpreting music elements and concepts criterion, the performance demonstrated individualisation within a clear understanding of the expectations of the chosen style.

Practices to strengthen

When making judgments for this IA for the 2025 syllabus, it is essential to consider the following key differences between the ISMGs in the 2019 and 2025 syllabuses:

- For the Analysing music criterion in the 2025 syllabus, the
 - 4–5 mark performance level requires students to demonstrate
 - breadth by analysing a wide range of music elements and concepts, and compositional devices in the chosen repertoire
 - depth by providing precise characteristics of music elements and concepts, and compositional devices
 - 6–7 mark performance level requires students to
 - analyse more than one music element or concept and compositional device at a time
 - provide analysis that is free from errors.
- For the Evaluating music criterion in the 2025 syllabus, at the
 - 2-mark performance level, evidence is required

- 3-mark performance level, the evidence chosen must be appropriate and meaningful to strengthen the judgments made
 - 4-mark performance level, the evidence chosen must be logical and defensible throughout the whole response, and the judgments must be based on common sense or general understanding
 - 5-mark performance level, the evidence chosen must be persuasive and believable throughout the whole response, and the judgments must be thoughtful and considered.
- For the Applying literacy skills criterion in the 2025 syllabus, the 3-mark performance level requires students to demonstrate their ideas in a logical order, with each idea building on the previous one.
- For the Using music elements and concepts criterion in the 2025 syllabus, the
 - focus is on style and genre
 - 3–4 mark performance level requires students to reflect the genre/style throughout the composition
 - 5–6 mark performance level requires students to make the style immediately apparent by combining features specific to the genre/style
 - 7–8 mark performance level requires students to demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the genre/style, shaping the music in a way that reflects the subtle intricacies of the style.
- For the Applying compositional devices criterion in the 2025 syllabus, the
 - 4–5 mark performance level requires students to use devices typical of the genre/style that enable the music ideas to evolve
 - 6–7 mark performance level requires students to
 - use devices that will create continuity and connection across all sections, creating a smooth and balanced flow
 - demonstrate a seamless combination of devices with attention to detail.
- For the Resolving music ideas criterion in the 2025 syllabus, the
 - focus is on the communication of narrative
 - 3-mark performance level requires students to demonstrate music ideas that are essential to communicate the narrative
 - 4-mark performance level requires students to strengthen and make the narrative clearer through the continuous execution of music ideas
 - 5-mark performance level requires students to communicate the narrative with deeper meaning or feeling, through small musical details and thoughtful and deliberate combination of music ideas.
- For the Demonstrating technique criterion in the 2025 syllabus, the
 - 5–6 mark performance level requires students to clearly demonstrate that they have control of their instrument or sound source, using techniques intended for the style and genre
 - 7–8 marks performance level requires students to demonstrate an advanced level of control and precision over their instrument or sound source, with a seamless performance and attention to detail.

- For the Interpreting music elements and concepts criterion in the 2025 syllabus, the
 - focus is on style and genre
 - 2–3 mark performance level requires students to shape music elements and concepts to demonstrate their understanding of the genre or style being performed throughout the performance
 - 4–5 mark performance level requires students to make the genre or style immediately apparent throughout the performance
 - 6–7 mark performance level requires students to demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the genre or style, shaping the music in a way that reflects the subtle intricacies of the style.
- For the Realising music ideas criterion in the 2025 syllabus, the
 - focus is on the communication of narrative
 - ISMG relates only to the process of how students bring their ideas to a conclusion to effectively communicate the narrative. There is no longer any assessment of a performance statement in this criterion
 - 3-mark performance level requires students to show evidence of the narrative being reinforced through careful choice of expressive devices
 - 4-mark performance level requires students to strengthen and make the narrative clear through the continuous execution of expressive devices
 - 5-mark performance level requires students to communicate the narrative with deeper meaning or feeling through small musical details.

Additional advice

It is essential to consider the following key differences between the 2019 and 2025 syllabuses:

- For the musicology component of the task, the 2025 syllabus allows students to investigate a topic relating to narrative in art song.
- While the total number of marks allocated to IA3 is the same in both syllabuses (35 marks), the criterion and their marks have been revised. In the 2025 syllabus
 - the Communicating meaning criterion has been revised to Realising music ideas for performance, and Resolving music ideas for composition
 - the Analysing and evaluating music criterion is now assessed in separate criterion, i.e. Analysing music and Evaluating music.
- For the composition component, the 2025 syllabus allows students to provide a program note as supporting evidence to assist audience understanding of meaning. However, unlike the 2019 syllabus, this supporting evidence will not be assessed.
- For the performance component, a performance statement is no longer required.

Schools should also:

- encourage students, for the musicology component of the task, to
 - clearly establish a viewpoint at the start of the musicology response to focus their project
 - choose repertoire that will enable them to analyse and evaluate with sufficient depth and breadth to satisfy the characteristics of detail, specificity, accuracy and interconnectivity in the ISMG

- choose a manageable section of repertoire that will inform their composition or performance. When students choose too much repertoire, they risk the analysis and evaluation being vague, thereby compromising their ability to demonstrate the accuracy and detail required for a mark of 5 or 6 in this criterion. For instance, it is appropriate for a student to analyse and evaluate a single piece for performance, analyse a performance of the piece by an expert performer, and use this material to inform their own performance. The same can apply for a single composition
- where choosing two pieces of repertoire to analyse, stay focused on their music viewpoint instead of writing a comparative analysis. The analysis and evaluation should focus on communicating meaning and informing the composition or performance
- focus their analysis and evaluation on the musical viewpoint and avoid irrelevant information, as this can compromise the structure and sequence of the work. For instance, song lyrics are not music elements, so lengthy poetic analysis is not required. The meaning of lyrics should be concisely stated, and the student work should focus on how music elements and concepts communicate the meaning. Similarly, the historical, cultural and autobiographical background of a piece, its composer and performers should only be included to clarify the analysis and evaluation, and inform the music created.
- ensure detailed analysis shows depth and breadth, e.g.
 - in terms of pitch, the description 'a C#9 chord' is more detailed than 'a chromatic chord' and the description 'F major' is more detailed than 'a major key'
 - the description 'an ascending major 6th from D4 to B4' is more detailed than 'an upward leap'
 - the description 'a bass riff consisting of E2, E2, E2, E2, G2, A2' is more detailed than 'a funky bass riff'
 - in terms of timbre, discussions need to go beyond simply naming instrument types and also discuss tone colour and range. For instance, 'a deep, booming R-808 kick drum sample' is more detailed than 'a low drum sound'
 - in terms of non-notated or electronic music, the description 'the Fender Stratocaster, played through a Fender Blues Junior 4 amplifier, with an Ibanez Tube Screamer pedal for distortion and sustain, played an octave leap from 440 Hz to 880 Hz', is more detailed than 'an electric guitar, using distortion, played an octave leap from 440 Hz to 880 Hz'
- make detailed determinations using their aural skills, the score (staff or tablature), or well-referenced secondary sources
- demonstrate how music elements, concepts and stylistic characteristics work together to communicate meaning, so students can meet the requirements of the 7–8 mark performance level. Generally, students who carefully choose sections of music and analyse music elements and concepts together within those sections are more successful than those who organise their analysis according to individual elements across the piece. Analysis organised under individual music element headings can discourage students from discussing elements together and should be avoided. Detailed and accurate analysis should then flow on to logical evaluation of the success of the use of the music elements and concepts
- support analytical findings with audio and/or visual excerpts. Evidence is required to access a mark of 5 in this criterion
- embed evidence in the response rather than relying on links to external sources. Links to external sources will not be accepted as evidence at confirmation

- encourage students to refer to the QCAA's *Academic integrity course for senior secondary students* in the myQCE Student Portal and use the referencing system employed by the school
- use checkpoint processes to guide students in using standard referencing conventions. Academic integrity requires that referencing is used to indicate sources of information
- only assess compositional material generated by the student. Authentication strategies should be employed in the drafting process to ensure the original work of the student can be identified so teacher judgments can be validated. This may require referencing within statements of compositional intent in some circumstances. For more information about authenticating student responses, see the *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook v7.0*, Sections 8.2.8 and 11.1.5. Where aspects of compositions are found to be plagiarised at confirmation, only the identifiable original student material will be confirmed. Application of school policies around academic integrity can protect students from unfortunate academic outcomes
- ensure the quality, accuracy and accessibility of the required files before submitting them for confirmation (*QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook v7.0*, Section 9.6.3). Schools should refer to the *Confirmation submission information* for Music (available in the Resources section of the Syllabuses app in the QCAA Portal) to check the submission requirements, including approved file formats. Students and teachers are encouraged to exercise care when converting material from one format to another to ensure that audio and video evidence is not lost. Strong, clear submissions of easily accessible evidence make the confirmation process seamless for all concerned, lower the stress levels of students and staff, and ensure that students receive the results they deserve.

Samples

The following excerpts have been included to demonstrate:

- Analysing and evaluating music at 8 marks, as the response
 - discusses the elements of pitch, expressive devices and duration together to demonstrate interconnectivity
 - analyses music elements and concepts in detail and with accuracy, e.g. 'demisemiquavers', 'C# major chord alternating with the non-diatonic minor sixth A natural'
 - includes evaluations that are valid and show how the music elements and concepts work together to evoke the setting of the beautiful and timeless lake. The rhythm described creates a 'shimmering effect', and harmonic choices create an 'otherworldly' ethereal effect
 - discusses the elements of timbre, duration and expressive devices together to demonstrate interconnectivity, and accurately describes the dynamics 'pianissimo', 'fortissimo' and articulations (pedalling)
 - analyses rhythms in detail using time names (e.g. 'minims', 'crotchets' and 'quavers' in relation to the 'lento' tempo. Detail is used in analysing timbre with the tonal colour described as 'velvety', 'alluring' and 'ethereal'
 - evaluates elements validly and shows how music elements and concepts work together to evoke the idea of a gentle love that develops into stronger feelings
- Applying literacy skills at 3 marks, as
 - the work is sequenced and connected
 - relevant terminology is used throughout

- cohesive ties (e.g. 'firstly', 'furthermore', 'soon after') assist the reader to follow the material. Clauses following semicolons are used to clarify meaning (e.g. 'This single note is exotic and 'otherworldly' to the home key of C# major; it emphasises the ethereal beauty of this scene'), and embedded phrases are used in sentences to add detail (e.g. 'A *Lento* tempo, combined with a melody of long minims, crochets and quavers, creates a sense of lingering, that haunts the listeners like the enchanting effect of a water nymph's voice')
- the rhythm of the sentences assists in clarifying expression. Often a detailed sentence of musical observation is followed by an explanation of its effect (e.g. 'At Bar 63, the piece builds to a fortissimo climax via ascending '*augmentez peu à peu*' chords. This intensification creates a rising drama that demands attention'). The nominalisation of the verb intensify to 'intensification' enables the student to efficiently discuss the effect of the musical decision. The choice of verbs (e.g. 'creates', 'haunts', 'echoes', 'contributes', 'builds') is exact, which improves the clarity of the argument.

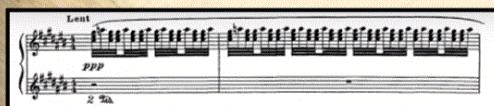
- Demonstrating technique at 8 marks, as
 - at 0:56–2:30, there is clear evidence of appropriate posture at the instrument, free movement of the wrists, musical use of arm and hand weight to manipulate timbre and dynamics, strong finger independence and the ability to securely play octaves and complex chords across the range of the piano
 - the student uses both the una corda pedal and the sustain pedal with skill and discernment, especially in the half pedalling of the bass notes in the more complex sonorities
- Interpreting music elements and concepts at 6 marks, as
 - at 0:08–1:30 there is clear evidence of individualisation within the style. The student employs extensive rubato, and, in terms of dynamics, gives each note in each chord individual weight and emphasis
 - at 1:15, the student gives individual articulation to the bass line for emphasis to create a unique, yet stylistic, interpretation of the piece
 - the student employs the una corda pedal to broaden the dynamic and timbral range of the performance and the sustain pedal to effectively create appropriate sonorities
- Communicating meaning at 10 marks, as the performance demonstrates evidence of dynamics, accents, rubato and articulation at 1:10–2:34 to communicate the impression required.

Note: The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s occurred throughout a response.

Excerpt 1

Setting

Firstly, Ravel portrays the setting at Ondine's lake as dreamlike and beautiful, realising this through the use of musical elements such as pitch, expressive devices and duration.



Video 1. Opening (Bar 1-2)

Furthermore, these opening trills feature a C# major chord alternating with the non-diatonic minor sixth, A natural. This single note is exotic and 'otherworldly' to the home key of C# major; it emphasises the ethereal beauty of this scene.

Soon after, at Bar 17, Ravel introduces cascading arpeggios that ascend and then descend broadly. In doing so, he furthers the imagery of flowing water, rising and falling like nature is breathing. The tuplets even continue through to Bar 23, one after another without rest, in a seemingly endless series: the beauty of the lake is timeless and everlasting.

The piece opens with only the right hand, playing demisemiquaver trills. The fast shimmering of notes mimics how moonlight wrinkles from tiny waves rippling on a lake. Already, Ravel has established the luminescence of the water.



Video 2 and 3. Cascading arpeggios (Bar 17-20) (left) and (Bar 21-23) (right)

Excerpt 2

Idea

Secondly, the idea of Ondine singing both enchantingly and longingly is also emulated throughout, via the use of musical elements such as timbre, duration and expressive devices.



Video 4. Opening (Bar 3-6)

The piece opens in both *pianississimo* and '*très doux et très expressif*', a soft and intimate song to her love, the knight.

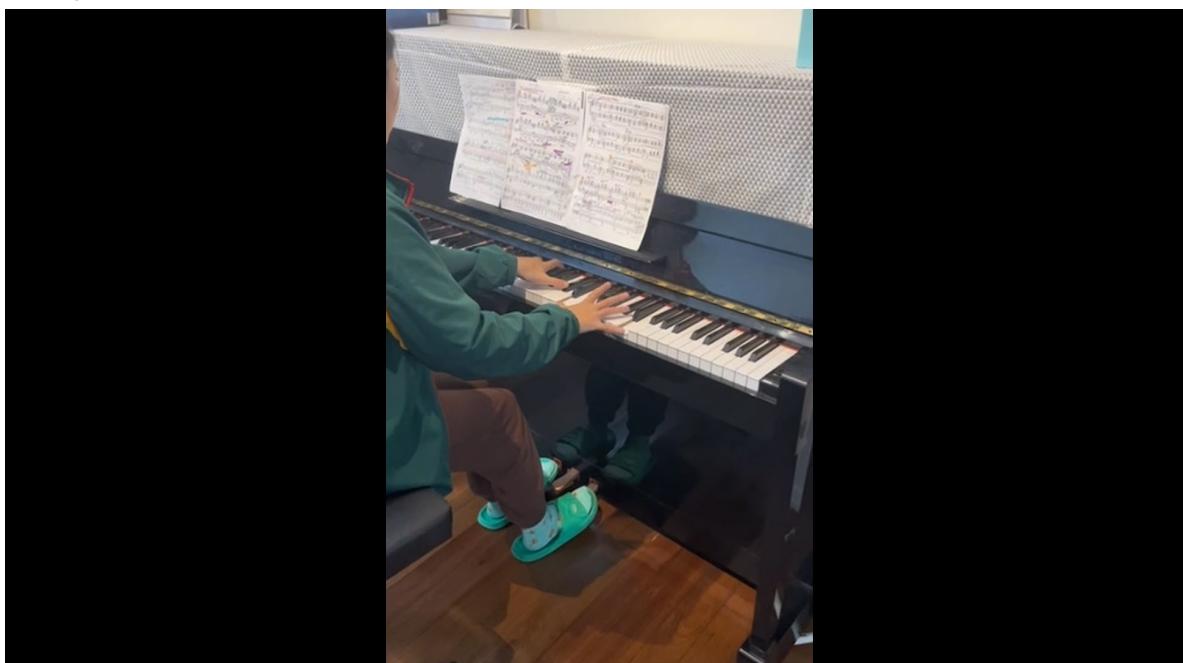
A *Lento* tempo, combined with a melody of long minims, crochets and quavers, creates a sense of lingering, that haunts the listeners like the enchanting effect of a water nymph's voice. This is emphasised by the marked sustain pedal, which echoes the melody in a dream-like trance; her singing, alluring and ethereal, impresses on the mortal

Furthermore, the melodic contour is smooth, with only small variations between subsequent notes, mind. descending and then ascending a little. This decision contributes to the lyrical flow of the song and the surreal, velvety-smoothness of her voice.

At Bar 63, the piece builds to a fortissimo climax via ascending '*augmentez peu à peu*' chords. This intensification creates a rising drama that demands attention, symbolising how her singing is growing more and more desperate; her lust is powerful.

Video 5 and 6.
Development
(Bar 63-64) (top) and
(Bar 65-66) (bottom)



Excerpt 3

Video content: (3 min, 6 secs)

<https://youtu.be/9DUVzuLLpm0>

The following excerpts have been included to demonstrate:

- Analysing and evaluating music at 8 marks, as the response
 - uses detailed and accurate music terminology, e.g. 'ascending triplet diminished scale'. Theme 1 is characterised by a D minor scale descending stepwise from the submediant (Bb) to the tonic (D), with dotted rhythms on the second and fourth beats that staggers pace of the melody
 - discusses the elements of pitch, expressive devices, duration and structure together from the start, enabling interconnectivity between music elements and concepts to be established, e.g. 'these are subsequently rhythmically shortened into quintuplets on the second beat of bar 27, with the last one being an inversion of bar 26 and octave higher, the higher register indicating increased emotional distress'
 - demonstrates valid and reasoned judgments, e.g. 'rhythmic unrest from bar 25 and chaotic nature of the unmeasured tremolo is a clear departure from the stillness and measuredness of the opening bars, indicating Schoenberg's musical transformation'
- Applying literacy skills at 3 marks, as the written expression is clear, with coherent structure and logical sequencing. Occasional grammatical slips do not impede the communication of the analysis and evaluation
- Demonstrating technique at 8 marks, as
 - at 2:00–2:50, there is clear evidence of controlled, accurate technique, with secure bowing and facility at the fingerboard enabling accurate intonation and stylistic vibrato
 - the performance is cohesive and fluent throughout

- Interpreting music elements and concepts at 6 marks as, at 0:44–1:42, there is evidence of rubato and the shaping of phrases to demonstrate individualised interpretation within the expectations of the style
- Communicating meaning at 10 marks as, at 0:08–0:39, the performance demonstrates articulation, vibrato, dynamics and phrase shaping that create contrasting moods to effectively communicate the narrative of the piece.

Note: The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s occurred throughout a response.

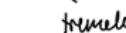
Excerpt 1

SECTION 1 BAR 1-29

Through several different musical elements and compositional devices, Schoenberg establishes atmosphere corresponding to Dehmel's poem in Section 1. The first stanza of Dehmel's poem describes the setting in which the two main characters are in. He describes a cold, dark forest with haunting oak trees lit by the moonlight. Schoenberg opens this piece in the same way, strategically using the musical elements of pitch, expressive devices, duration, and structure. An ominous mood is established by the second cellos playing minums on the lowest D (bar 1). This is doubled an octave above by the second violas, the marked tenuto lines create a dense sound that has a claustrophobic, pulsating effect. Expressive devices are used; markings of "pp" and "very soft" dynamic indicates an air of suspense and eeriness. The melody enters on an off beat at the end of bar 4 with the first violas and cellos playing in octaves. The descending scale establishes D minor as the tonic key, which was specifically chosen to set the "dark" mood. It is harmonised by the second violins, first violas, and first cellos in unison rhythm. Additionally, duration is manipulated using dotted rhythms to build tension. The overall atmosphere of the introduction can be compared to a funeral march, the processional mood representing a slow walk in the woods.

From bar 20 to 28, Schoenberg builds tension leading into the woman's confession (Section 2). Use of duration in the ascending triplet diminished scale started by the second cellos and continued by the violins, builds forward movement (bar 21). Harmonic dissonance of the forward-moving diminished scale is juxtaposed against intensely held dotted minums in the violins and first violas (A Bb, D, E natural) creating emotional tension towards the end of the phrase.

Schoenberg builds tension again from bar 25 to 28 by repeating the thematic rhythm twice then repeating the first two beats in one bar. This is combined with the use of tremolo played *sul ponticello* creates a metallic, eerie tone. It imitates shaking, expressing extreme anxiety of the woman. Additionally, the musical element of duration is used. First violin has sextuplets are grouped 1-2, 1-2-3 in a descending scale. These are subsequently rhythmically shortened into quintuplets on the second beat of bar 27, with the last one being an inversion of bar 26 an octave higher, the higher register indicating increased emotional distress. Schoenberg's expressive marking of accelerando urges the music into the next section (bar 27). *Molto rit.* is indicated in bar 28, combined with a crescendo. All instruments play tremolo, a descending bassline is written in the second violins, second cellos, and bases. Rhythmic unrest from bar 25 and chaotic nature of unmeasured tremolo is a clear departure from the stillness and measuredness of the opening bars, indicating Schoenberg's musical transformation.

Excerpt 2

SECTION 2 (BAR 30-214)

Schoenberg characterises the woman as anxious and expresses her emotional turmoil in Section 2 using several different musical elements and compositional devices. In the poem, she confesses "I am carrying a child, and not yours, I walk in sin beside you. I have committed a great offense against myself.". This section features melodies that are intense and passionate in nature, especially bar 34-30 and 201-211.

Bar 34-40 show the outpouring of her feelings where the high register is used to convey intense emotional distress. Contour of the melody in the first violins is used to convey the feeling of desperation. This is evident when it reaches up from bar 33 to 34, only to fall down a major sixth (F-E-G) and climb back up to a B flat in the next octave. This ascending-descending musical idea continues until bar 40. Underneath this intense melody, Schoenberg writes a countermelody in the first cellos which could be interpreted as the feelings of the man mirroring the woman's emotions. Choice of an instrument with voice-like timbre at appropriate register is strategic, as although the emotions are also intense in nature, it has a grounding quality. Additionally, imitation is seen in several places in this passage (see left). It becomes evident that the countermelody serves as the man's response and empathy to the woman's emotions.

Crotchet tremolo in bases, second violas, and second cellos is combined with hairpin dynamics to bring out its following of the melodic contour (exception being contrary motion for climactic effect bar 36). This creates a thick texture and pulsing undercurrent for the melody and countermelody to be built upon which conveys underlying anxiety.

Bar 32-40

The moonlight theme returns transformed in Section 2 from bar 201-211. It contains weight and convolution of the woman's confession, shown through the musical elements of pitch (harmony and melody), duration, expressive devices, and timbre.

Bar 201-211

PESANTE, GRAVE, expressive markings, accents on beat 1,3, tritones, minim, unison rhythms in accompaniment, insistent minim rhythm from melodic motif in bar 9.

The sonorous harmonies played by supporting voices in Section 1 are transformed into anguished dissonance (multiple whole tone clashes) reflective of turbulent character emotion. Melodic motif from bar 9 is transformed, now simplified into minim beats (see bottom left). Beat 1 and 3 in the melody accented and all parts are played fortissimo, with accompaniment in a unison minim rhythm. Schoenberg uses expressive marking of *pesante* in this section, indicating to play with a heavy articulation. This increases richness and density of sound, emphasising the pedal note and intensifying weight of the music. Consequently, emotional effect of overwhelming self-reproach and inner guilt of the woman is successfully characterised. The tritone interval is heard in the first violins (F flat), creating strong tension. Sustained and accented cello notes are put in the lower register, creating a sound effect reminiscent of church bells. The accented, separated diminished chords are insistent and accusatory, imitating measured bell tolls. This alludes to divine judgement and her self-condemnation of sin.

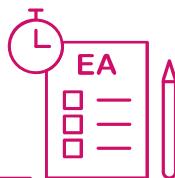
Schoenberg also manipulates tonality by inching the theme's tonal centre through modulation upward from D flat major (bar 201). Bar 206-207 transition up a semitone into D minor briefly (bar 208) before climbing upward again in bar 210 to the new key of G minor. The effect of this is rising tension, portraying the woman's palpable anguish and anxiety.

Excerpt 3



Video content: (2 min, 58 secs)

<https://youtu.be/JjO6cn04yDk>



External assessment

External assessment (EA) is developed and marked by the QCAA. The external assessment for a subject is common to all schools and administered under the same conditions, at the same time, on the same day. The external assessment papers and the external assessment marking guide (EAMG) are published in the year after they are administered.

Examination (25%)

Assessment design

The assessment instrument was designed using the specifications, conditions and assessment objectives described in the summative external assessment section of the syllabus.

The examination consisted of one paper (30 marks), with a choice of three extended response questions and three stimulus items.

The assessment required students to write an analytical essay in response to an unseen stimulus, answering a question related to the concept of change. The stimulus included three score-based and aural works from different sources, which were designed to elicit an opportunity to demonstrate the assessment objectives.

Assessment decisions

Assessment decisions are made by markers by matching student responses to the EAMG.

Effective practices

Overall, students responded well to:

- the stimulus, responding to the two specified key moments as required by the question
- the question they chose, making their choice clear and marking this accurately on the paper
- making effective judgments on the stimulus in relation to the question
- the requirement to write an analytical essay, using written literacy skills in a logical and organised manner.

Practices to strengthen

When preparing students for external assessment, it is recommended that teachers consider:

- strategies to support students to
 - use their aural perception skills to analyse and evaluate the use of music elements and/or concepts not present in the score provided
 - understand that lyrics are not a music element and should not be treated as such when deconstructing and evaluating key moments
 - effectively use written musical terminology and vocabulary to demonstrate the deconstruction of music elements and concepts
 - understand how to structure their written response in a manner that brings multiple music elements and/or concepts together, so they can make connections between them to find meaning

- consider the context of the question and develop the ability to use language and insight to communicate meaning in relation to their chosen question
- structure their written response around the specific key moments to ensure they can communicate ideas and meaning in a sustained, organised and cohesive sequence
- be discerning in the selection of analytical evidence and credible examples, so these are focused on the specific context of the question, rather than broadly generalising the effectiveness of the composer.

Samples

Extended response

The following excerpts have been included to illustrate effective student responses in one or more of the syllabus assessment objectives.

Criterion: Explaining and analysing music elements and concepts

Effective student responses:

- demonstrated breadth by analysing a wide range of music elements and concepts when deconstructing each key moment
- demonstrated depth by revealing layers of detail and specificity.

These excerpts have been included:

- to demonstrate breadth through the analysis of multiple music elements and concepts, and depth through detailed and accurate analysis that provides layered specificity.

Excerpt 1

The bass of the piano

part utilises parallel perfect 5ths skillfully portraying an underlying drone while the right hand in the treble clef uses a ^{repeated} ~~similar~~ rhythm of ($\downarrow \uparrow \square \downarrow$), throughout this section (92 - 105) strongly exposing a sense of stability as the singer ^{allows a} ~~creates~~ more expressive freedom effectively providing enough support of the vocalist in her helplessness.

Excerpt 2

this meaning is
in the melody

emphasised by the minum that ends each musical phrase, such as at bar 104. In conjunction with the largo tempo, the long duration of the minum note causes the A^b4 note to be held for a long duration, so that the note fades away. Thus, it is portrayed gradually this ~~is~~ ^{is} portrays ~~unbelievable~~ ^{unbelievable} the loss of hope, as it fades away in the face of change.

Excerpt 3

Then, at bars 127 – 131, the melody alternates between E^b4 and B^b4, without notes in between. This interval jump, across seven semitones, comes across as jarring and unnatural. Subsequently, when combined with the stiffness of ~~only~~ mainly featuring crotchetts without rhythmic variation, feelings of despair and ~~the~~ ^{an} uncanny and uncomfortable atmosphere is created. As a result, ~~the~~ feelings of despair and ~~despair~~ ^{it is depicted how} horror arise when faced with a change that takes away the landscape.

Criterion: Analysing relationships

Effective student responses:

- consistently analysed more than one music element or concept at a time to identify how they work together to communicate meaning.

These excerpts have been included:

- to demonstrate the analysis of more than one element or concept within the same paragraph.

Excerpt 1

This despair is again depicted at bar 134. The vocalist sings on soprano A^b note, leaping to a high register. This results in a piercing, uncomfortable pitch, ~~that~~ which, combined with the ~~f~~ fortissimo dynamic, resembles a sudden, jarring scream. Thus, the passage illustrates the emotional response of despair and hopelessness, in a desperate cry for ~~help~~ salvation against the unstoppable changes. This scream, however, fades away over bars 134-142.

Excerpt 2

This begins with a key change modulation to C minor as the previous Chorus (2), created more colour & variety in the chord progression. The irregular modulation from D^b- Cm strongly causes an abrupt shift & build to intensity ~~fff~~ with the dynamic level at forte (f, strong & loud).

Criterion: Evaluating the use of music elements and concepts

Effective student responses:

- made insightful judgments about the purpose of music elements and concepts to communicate meaning in relation to the chosen question.

These excerpts have been included:

- to demonstrate considered and thoughtful judgments about the downward melodic contour in combination with the rallentando in depicting how the emotion of despair settles into resignation (Excerpt 1)
- to demonstrate unpacking subtle layers of meaning in relation to the discomfort, unrest and unfamiliarity of this new life (Excerpt 2).

Excerpt 1

The melody uses the notes A^b5, B^b5, E^b5 and D^b5, creating an overall downward melodic contour. In combination with the rallentando at bar 140 slowing the tempo, the scream loses its ~~high pitch and~~ strength, lowering in both pitch and tempo as it fades away. Consequently, this depicts how ultimately, the emotions of despair settles into helpless resignation ~~as~~, as the change cannot be stopped. Finally, the piece ends on a G^b.

Excerpt 2

At bar 138, the chord ~~B^b7 A^b6 D^b5 G^b4~~ changes to F minor (the subdominant fourth of C minor & dominant of B^b minor as the vocalist sings a B^b which is a 7th from the previous note. (A^b). This skillfully reveals an unease, & unrest & unfamiliarity to this change in her cry of help in 'who will save us'. The singer then shifts to the E^b (fifth) & then ^{ingers} on the D^b strongly emphasising the tension to the new life ~~as with~~ as it finishes without resting on the tonic. ~~RR~~

Criterion: Justifying the use of music elements and concepts

Effective student responses:

- used bar numbers or time codes to reference analysis of music elements and concepts
- provided examples within the specified key moments to convincingly support the judgments made about the use of music elements or concepts.

These excerpts have been included:

- to demonstrate examples that convincingly support the judgments
- to show the use of bar numbers to reference an example.

Excerpt 1

The hopelessness, helplessness is articulated through the quaver rest ~~is~~ in bar 93 as this subtle breath & pause ~~is~~ expresses a dramatic effect, as if the vocalist had spoken the words 'everything familiar ~~is~~ is gone' strongly reflecting a broken conversation in daily life, & skillfully communicating to the audiences a connection to change.

Excerpt 2

At bar 134, the chord changes to a B^b minor, the natural 7th of C minor conveying an unfamiliarity in the section & tension as the singer sings on the A^b for ~~2~~ four dotted minim beats, and this dramatic emphasis in this high register is ~~an~~ ~~unsettling~~ ~~is~~ masterful reflection & any of 'who' as this yearn & emotional response is communicated to the ~~listening~~ ~~the~~ listeners. This

Criterion: Applying literacy skills

Effective student responses:

- organised ideas in a sequenced and cohesive manner
- structured body paragraphs by key moments, in which each moment was unpacked in an organised manner.