2019 Music Studies Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the previous year’s assessment cycle, gives an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, and the quality of student performance.

Teachers should refer to the subject outline for specifications on content and learning requirements, and to the subject operational information for operational matters and key dates.

Teachers are also encouraged to utilise the resources provided on the SACE website. This includes the clarifying materials provided in PLATO, which is helpful in both providing ideas for designing assessment tasks and in applying the performance standards to the students work.

School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Creative Works (40%)

This assessment task allows students to apply their musical understanding, skills and techniques by presenting a folio of their own creative works, which could include performances, compositions or arrangements.

The students also present a creator’s statement, in which they provide evidence of their learning as they reflect on their creative works.

The more successful responses commonly:

* linked performances with a theme, which gave students a starting point for their creator’s statement
* performed solo or ensemble works demonstrating strong instrumental skills along with a highly developed understanding of the music they are performing
* produced compositions and/or arrangements with scores that utilised correct chord conventions
* produced arrangements intentionally and successfully in a style different from the original work used
* presented well organised creator’s statements which discussed higher order musical elements, making good use of tables and/or musical examples to inform the text/script.

The less successful responses commonly:

* produced scores of compositions/arrangements lacking in normal score conventions, such as appropriate transposition and used of dynamics, tempo markings etc.
* performed solo or ensemble works demonstrating less developed instrumental skills and lacking a solid understanding of the music they are performing
* presented poorly organised creator’s statements which lacked details and failed to discuss higher order musical elements, using ‘cut-and-paste’ musical examples without real context or reason.

Teachers need to ensure that students are clearly identified in videos of ensemble performances and that part‑testing is included in the evidence provided for ensemble performance students. It would also be helpful if sheet music is provided for both solo and ensemble performances, and audio provided along with the scores for both student compositions and arrangements.

Assessment Type 2: Music Literacy (30%)

Students complete three literacy tasks, allowing students to manipulate musical elements, apply and refine musical literacy skills, deconstruct and analyse musical works and/or styles and synthesise their findings.

At last one of the three tasks should be a composition or arrangement, allowing the students to demonstrating their practical application in manipulating musical elements.

The more successful responses commonly:

* created musical works that clearly demonstrated skills and knowledge appropriately matched to the given task, such as well-organised arrangements in a style and utilising instrumentation the student knew well
* responded to music with written work, such as analyses, which were enhanced through the discussion of higher order musical elements
* demonstrated a highly developed understanding of and response to music through competent completion of complex aural and harmony skills tests
* synthesised their findings in well written or produced responses, which included thoughtful discussion of musical elements with helpful use of musical excerpts where appropriate.

The less successful responses commonly:

* created musical works that did not demonstrate a working knowledge of the instruments included or the style used, or which were lacking in structure or form
* responded to music with written work, such as analyses, which were lacking in depth and focussed mainly on basic musical elements, such as tempo and dynamics, rather than higher order elements, such as compositional techniques
* demonstrated a less developed understanding of and response to music through less than competent completion of complex aural and harmony skills tests
* presented their findings in less competent written or produced responses, which included basic discussion of musical elements with overuse of musical excerpts to pad out the document with little explanation.

It would also be helpful if teachers could indicate which LAP applies to which group of students where two or more schools are grouped together for assessment purposes. It is also important that all relevant summative evidence of learning is included to help with the moderation process, such as an audio file for all compositions and arrangements, along with a score for each audio file. Submission of the source material for arrangements, though not subscribed, is also helpful in helping to ascertain the students arranging skills and knowledge.

External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Examination (30%)

Overall the examination was similar to the exemplar examination provided by the SACE Board to allow students their best opportunity to demonstrate their skills and knowledge in this new subject.

Students also were provided a formula sheet for the first time, and a number questions were given with the student’s ability to use this sheet in mind.

Question 1

Students were generally successful in answering these four aural recognition questions, with most students answering at least three of the four parts correctly.

Question 2

Students found this rhythmic dictation question challenging, with only some correctly notating the rhythm. Those who were less successful did not recognise the two semiquavers at the end on the first full bar, or take into account the anacrusis when notating the final bar.

Question 3

Many students found this interval recognition question difficult; some were able to correctly identify and notate the tow intervals. Common incorrect answers included the major second in (a) rather than the correct minor second, and a perfect fifth in (b) instead of the correct major sixth.

Question 4

This question was answered successfully by many students, who correctly identified the natural minor scale in (a), and the blues scale in (b).

Question 5

This melodic dictation question proved challenging for many students. Some notated the melody and answered the two additional questions correctly. Less successful answers missed the E natural leading note as the first note to write and did not recognise the octave interval between the last note of bar 1 and the first note of bar 2.

Question 6

Most students successfully answered this question by correctly identifying option 3 as the chord progression.

Question 7

This melody completion question was the first creative question in the paper. The more successful students made use of the two rhythmic motives present in the given start, used a discernible cadence to finish their melody, and took note of the anacrusis in completing the rhythm of the last bar.

Question 8

Most students were successful in this set of questions. The more successful answers recognised and mentioned the introduction and coda to the ternary form in part (a) and were able to adequately describe the difference in how the ‘straight’ section at the end was to be played in part (e).

Question 9

Again, this question, which relied totally on aural skills with no score provided, was answered well by most students.

Question 10

Most students were able to correctly identify option 3 in this short aural recognition question based on Question 9’s music.

Question 11

Answers to this question, which required analysis of an arrangement of a nursey rhyme, were generally successful, but only some answers achieved full marks. The most successful answers were able to identify seventh chords, secondary/minor chords, extended chords and/or altered-note chords in part (b), recognise that the tenor saxophone was playing the melody with the trumpet playing countermelodic fillers in part (c), and to correctly transpose the notes as F below the stave (tenor sax) and D below the stave (trumpet) and recognise the major 6th interval in parts (d) and (e).

Question 12

In this comparative analysis question the most successful answers were able to recognise the two common chord progressions in part (b) as 6-2-5-1 (part i) and 1-6-2-5 (part ii).

Question 13

Most students were able to complete the three parts below the given melody in this question generally well. The most successful students were able to write three additional parts that complemented the given melody both melodically and rhythmically, adding chord extensions where appropriate (such as in adding an E in parts 1 or 2 in the second half of bar 1 to extend to an F sharp minor seventh chord) and added passing or auxiliary notes between notes in parts judiciously to add colour and movement.

Question 14

Some students were able to correctly complete these challenging grouping questions including correctly adding the bar lines.

Question 15

Students provided strong harmonisations for their chosen option in this question, with many gaining the majority of marks available.

Option A

The most successful students selected and spelled their chords carefully, and applied correct voice leading in the parts. Strong chords were used at cadence points, and higher-level skills were demonstrated in utilisation of six-four chords and dominant seventh chords as appropriate.

Option B

The most successful students selected and spelled their chords carefully and applied correct and smooth part writing in the chord voicings. The modulation to D major or B minor in the second half of bar 1 was recognised and correctly facilitated, and higher-level skills were demonstrated in utilisation of extended and altered-note chords as appropriate.