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Ensemble Performance

2016 Chief Assessor’s Report

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## Overview

Chief Assessors’ reports give 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, the quality of student performance, and any relevant statistical information.

Students achieved the requirements of this course in a wide variety of ensemble settings in 2016. These included duos, quartets, rock bands, choirs, big bands, and orchestras that were based within schools or within the wider community.

## School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: First Performance

**The more successful students**

* presented their first performance of approximately half their repertoire in accordance with their school’s approved learning and assessment program (LAP)
* performed with pitch, intonation, and rhythmic accuracy, and a high degree of stylistic understanding and musical expression
* presented their part demonstrating their musical and technical fluency at the highest levels.

**The less successful students**

* performed simple works that did not enable the demonstration of technical fluency and accuracy of notes, rhythms, and intonation at the highest level
* performed works with limited opportunity to show contrasting dynamics and musical and stylistic understanding
* selected works to present in a genre or style that they were not familiar with
* provided part testing that was not confident and did not display consistent pulse, tempo, and observance of all markings
* failed to complete part testing for the assessment

**General information**

Students are encouraged to prepare for assessment of their ensemble performance by careful rehearsal and by participating in master classes or formative assessments, including part testing.

Assessment Type 2: Second Performance

The comments for Assessment Type 1: First Performance also apply to Assessment Type 2: Second Performance.

## External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Final Performance

**The more successful students**

* provided clearly marked copies of the music presented for the markers
* had prepared their performance notes sheets for the markers with the program clearly marked
* performed in an accomplished manner with their accompanist (as appropriate)
* were easily identified within the ensemble.

**The less successful students**

* presented works that were all of a simple nature, and were unable to demonstrate their achievements against the performance standards at the highest levels
* did not provide sheet music of their part and therefore made it difficult to demonstrate accuracy of notes and rhythms to markers
* presented a program of works that did not meet the time requirement for this assessment type (10–12 minutes).

## Operational Advice

School assessment tasks are set and marked by teachers. Teachers’ assessment decisions are reviewed by moderators. Teacher grades/marks should be evident on all student school assessment work.

Additional points:

* Where school assessments need to be altered from that specified in the approved LAP, teachers are advised to use the LAP addendum
* Recordings of student work may be submitted using USB drives. Where possible, provide two identical USB drives of all students’ first performances and two identical USB drives of all students’ second performances, as this arrangement assists the speed and efficiency of the moderation process. Student recordings should be labelled clearly with the student’s SACE registration number
* Providing a student table of contents with every student listed with a photo and SACE registration number, and providing a list of which student is in which ensemble are both advantageous to the moderation process.
* When submitting student performances for moderation, include the video file of the performance (in a format accessible to moderators) and performance notes sheets for the same performances. Do not include sheet music.
* First and second performances must be video-recorded through the year for review by moderators at central moderation. When making recordings of performances, teachers are advised to check the audio balance and the camera definition and lighting. Placement of the camera to demonstrate the performers’ posture, embouchure, and/or hand positions is advisable, where possible. Where a large ensemble is being assessed with several different candidates, then it is crucial that each candidate is easily identifiable in the ensemble. It is important to avoid music stands or other equipment blocking sight lines. Performances should be recorded as one continuous file and not as separate movements, songs, or pieces.
* Teachers and students are reminded that individual part testing is required for every candidate at each assessment type.

## General Comments

Where teachers have small classes, it is beneficial to collaborate with a colleague to benchmark performances throughout the year.

Those teachers who attended clarifying forums or accessed assistance from colleagues tended to be better prepared for assessments and were able to apply the performance standards consistently.

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Chief Assessor