2021 Music Explorations 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.

School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Music Literacy (30%)

This assessment type provides the opportunity for students to demonstrate understanding of musical elements, apply musical literacy skills, analyse and discuss musical works, and develop their understanding of the relationship between musical notation and sound. Students complete three musical literacy tasks. At least one of the three tasks should be a composition task of an original melody or song with lyrics and chords (of between 32-48 bars) using standard music notation where students demonstrate practical application of musical literacy through the manipulation of musical elements. For the remaining two music literacy tasks, a broader range of tasks are emerging including: contemporary music theory and aural tests, reflection and critique of a live music performance, analysis and discussion of one or more works focusing on style technique, and comparison of performance and arranging interpretations of the same musical piece.

The more successful responses commonly:

* used standard notation and demonstrated correct groupings and a range of melodic and rhythmic devices
* explored and developed aspects of standard harmonic progressions, and also contained chord spelling that demonstrated a range of harmonic variety and colour appropriate to the chosen style
* provided a melody which outlined chord extensions and supporting harmonic colour, and a sense of form appropriate to the style
* included performance indicators, dynamic expressions, articulations, accurate text formatting following standard conventions (syllables, melismas, appropriate slurring)
* demonstrated an in-depth exploration and innovative experimentation with musical styles, influences
* demonstrated variation syncopation passing notes suspensions in a creative manner, as outlined in the subject supporting document
* used their composer’s statement to provide concise, insightful and accurate explanations of the skills and techniques they used in their composition
* used a multimodal presentation format that provided a range of evidence from the pieces being studied to support their musical insight points of discussion and opinions
* gave insightful comments on the performers' choices and the effect they had
* demonstrated detail and depth of analysis and evaluation in analytical tasks and critiques.

The less successful responses commonly:

* provided only lead sheets or representations of an original song or melodic composition without standard score conventions and performance indicators
* chose to represent their melody only as a recording, with the form of notation being only text-based lyrics and chords without at least a single stave melody line in standard clef notation
* used limited rhythmic and melodic range, and extensive repetition of harmonic progressions
* only provided screenshots of music software arrangement windows and/or piano roll editor views without any detail using standard music notation
* submitted only a form of guitar TAB without any use of standard treble or bass clef notation
* provided composer’s statements with limited use of appropriate technical and musical terminology and/or limited reference to the music elements in the supporting document within the Subject Outline
* focused on non-musical elements such as lighting/staging/characterisation, to the determent of demonstrating in-depth musical understanding
* provided limited evidence to support their musical insights or learning statements, such as evidence of score analysis, aural analysis table(s), annotations, quotes, edited video footage, etc.

Assessment Type 2: Explorations (40%)

Through this assessment type students have opportunities to develop and extend their understanding of music by exploring how music is made, exploring musical styles, influences, and/or techniques, experimenting with styles and techniques and synthesising their findings in a presentation and commentary. Students demonstrate their learning by presenting a folio of their own creative works, which could include performances, compositions or arrangements.

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated evidence of experimentation and choice within a focused and purposeful direction, leading towards extended application within the external assessment — AT3: Creative Connections
* used their commentary to explain their learning focus by judiciously using musical language and technical terminology within a multimodal presentation format including video/audio footage, score annotations, and evidence of skills development through drafts, etc.
* demonstrated development in a broad range of performance techniques and skills across a range of musical styles using shorter excerpt-style mini-performances, which are distinctly different from the longer ‘performance-format’ preferred for Music Performance: Solo and Ensemble
* demonstrated a detailed range of production, recording and song writing techniques within a folio of created works using music technology
* demonstrated a range of compositional techniques and styles using conventional standard notation within a collection of effective and successful short compositions or arrangements for solo and small ensembles
* displayed multiple examples both notated and filmed of the artistic process and honing of musical techniques.

The less successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated limited personal experimentation and creative choice within a performance or creative work
* performed and presented works within a group ensemble that limited their opportunity to address the specific features of the assessment design criteria
* presented performance programs ideally suited to the Music Performance: Solo and Ensemble subjects
* discussed their works and learning using a limited range of musical and technical language
* provided limited evidence to support their musical insights or learning statements
* used generic images and/or presentation mode not relevant to their discussion in the commentary
* did not state or provide evidence of how their explorations related to or modified their performances or compositions.

External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Creative Connections (30%)

This assessment type allows students to synthesise their learning in this subject from their explorations, experimentation, and development of their musical literacy skills, to present a final creative work (performance, composition, or arrangement) and a discussion of that work.

Student creative works included: solo and small group performances, song writing and recording, EDM production recording, movie soundtrack compositions and notated compositions for instruments or vocal combinations.

The more successful creative works and discussions commonly:

* presented creative works that enabled them to demonstrate a sophisticated and well-developed range of musical skills, techniques and styles
* provided critique and analysis of their creative work, recognising influences while using accurate and detailed musical and technical terminology
* submitted a multimodal discussion of their learning using a range of personalised evidence. For example photos, videos, score annotations and voice recording explanations
* ensured video recordings of group performances clearly identified student being assessed
* discussed a clear link to the explorations undertaken in Assessment Type 2 and demonstrated a synthesis and summary of their learning.

The less successful creative works and discussions commonly:

* presented works that provided a limited range of musical skills and techniques and/or limited their opportunity to demonstrate experimentation and choice
* discussed their works and learning using a limited range of musical and technical language
* used generic images and/or presentation mode not relevant to their discussion
* performed and presented works within a group ensemble that limited their opportunity to address the specific features of the assessment design criteria
* obscured and/or reduced the focus upon the assessed students within videos of performances
* presented performances and commentaries in the style of the Music Performance subjects
* lacked a deep connection to their AT2 Exploration folio of experimentation and skills development.