

MUSIC

<p>Paper 9483/11 Listening</p>
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Key messages

Candidates should become familiar with the Set Works in **Section A** so as to gain an understanding of the compositional techniques commonly found in Baroque instrumental music, as well as a knowledge of its common performance practices.

The opening short answer questions on one of these works will settle candidates at the start of the exam. It is in the following questions on the unprepared extract from the Baroque that candidates will apply this knowledge and understanding. Here, the more extended answers need not be written in continuous prose. Teachers may wish to prepare candidates to focus their observations in bulleted formats.

In questions in **Section B** which focus on the particular features of two Set Works, candidates should give particular thought to how essays are structured. They may, for instance, take each musical feature in turn and discuss in relation to both works. Alternatively, they may choose to discuss each work in turn, discussing all of its features pertinent to the specific aspect of the question.

In both **Section B** and **Section C** candidates may wish to illustrate their answers with notated quotations. Where centres have prepared candidates to give these notated references, it should be made sure that manuscript paper is available in the examination. This will avoid having to spend time ruling stave lines within the body of text, as was the case for some candidates this session.

General comments

In **Section A**, candidates were less able than in previous sessions to answer the opening short questions on a set work. The short questions on the unprepared work were somewhat better. However, it was pleasing to see a real improvement in candidates' ability to write more widely and in greater detail in the extended answers in this Section.

In **Section B** a pleasing number of candidates were clearly very familiar with the set work(s) discussed, being able to address the specific aspect of the question and support their knowledge with helpful references to the score(s). Although there is no extra credit for notated quotations, it was very pleasing to see so many in this session. They can help to establish the candidates' familiarity with the music. Unfortunately some candidates had not been provided with manuscript paper, and time was spent ruling stave lines.

At the other end of the range, some essays showed little knowledge of the features of the music, or understanding of its compositional techniques used in relation to the theme of Time and Place.

All three questions in **Section C** provided some full and well referenced answers. In the best essays candidates were able to show themselves to be knowledgeable and thoughtful musicians, able to give extensive accounts with a clear point of view. Some of these stronger essays were further illustrated with notated quotations. Weaker answers wrote in more general terms, or perhaps showed some misunderstanding of the thrust of the question, and essays were often less well illustrated with references to music or performers.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates were able to identify the three sections of this movement
- (b) (i) Comparatively few answers were correct.
 - (ii) Of the candidates who correctly identified the key of the passage, very few were able to identify its relationship to the tonic as being the submediant.
 - (iii) This was well answered, with many candidates gaining both marks.

Question 2

- (a) A good number of answers correctly gave 'melodic' or 'natural', though a significant number gave answers which showed a misunderstanding of the question.
- (b) This was correctly identified by the majority of candidates.
- (c) Many candidates gained both marks here, but many others gained only 1 mark, usually for identifying D minor but misnaming the cadence.
- (d) Few candidates were able to identify the circle of fifths.
- (e) A large majority of answers gained both marks here.
- (f) Nearly all candidates received some credit here, with a pleasing number gaining five or six marks. The fugal or contrapuntal texture was identified by most, with many answers going on to give details of the entries of subject and answer with correct bar references.

Question 3

- (a) Very few failed to score some credit here. Most candidates correctly observed the more staccato articulation in Performance B as well its more frequent accents. The ornamentation in Performance A was observed, with many citing its frequency at cadence points. Several answers commented in more detail on Performance A's articulation, noting the occasional slurs and describing it as generally non-legato, or less staccato than Performance B.
- (b) Again, nearly all answers gained some credit here, with a pleasing number being placed in the top mark band. Differences in tempo and pitch were observed by most, as was the use of harpsichord in Performance A only. Very few mentioned the use of organ or lute in Performance B's continuo. Appropriate views were expressed by a good number of candidates on Performance A's historically informed features. The distinctions in overall sound and balance were correctly described by many. Only a small number of candidates incorrectly made references to articulation or ornamentation here.

Section B

Question 4

This was the more popular choice for candidates in this Section. Most candidates were able to show a knowledge of the Russian hymn and folk songs used in Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*, as well as the references to *La Marseillaise*. Better essays were able to explain these references with extensive observations on dynamics, orchestration and the development and combination of themes. In general candidates were less secure when writing about the Sculthorpe, and this section of their answer was often briefer than the section on the Tchaikovsky.

Question 5

The strongest answers here were able to give detailed explanations of how the voice and orchestra shared roles and melodic material in Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*. Less secure answers were able to give some examples of word painting, with both voice and orchestra responding to the general mood of the text or to specific words. Whilst examples of word painting were appropriate, they did not tell the whole story. More general observations for instance on the equal partnership between voice and orchestra, or the role of the orchestra in establishing the mood of each section for the voice, as well as the closing mood of the work – these gave a fuller picture of the relationship between the two.

Section C

Question 6

Answers here often referred to the shared experience of singing or playing together, or of attending performances together. The bonds formed by fans of a particular artist or genre were explained. More thoughtful answers discussed the role of folk music in preserving the identity of communities, or the way in which music can enhance the experience of community celebrations or ritual. Some answers made reference to the more global sense of community experienced with music shared through technology in the pandemic.

Question 7

Although there were some balanced essays here, which gave equal attention to the creation and sharing of music, many found less to say about its creation. There were many good, well-referenced essays detailing how the internet has had a huge impact on the sharing of music, with well-known social media sites being cited as providing platforms for musicians to share their musicmaking. Those answers which did best when considering the creation of music discussed the online availability of music of all genres around the world, however niche in appeal, for composers to hear and from which to draw influence and inspiration. The availability of sampled music, sounds and sound effects were also cited.

Question 8

This essay was generally very well answered. Candidates were able to explain both similarities and differences when comparing pop and jazz. Popular features for discussion were structure, instrumentation and harmony. Most candidates pointed to a generally more sophisticated musical language in jazz, and mentioned its more 'unscripted' structure reliant on improvisation. The general distinction was made between the acoustic instrumentation of jazz and the electro-acoustic instruments found in pop. In nearly all these wide-ranging accounts, candidates were able to show a secure familiarity with the artists and numbers they referenced. Some of these illustrations were further supported by notated quotations.

MUSIC

Paper 9483/12
Listening

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At the other end of the range, some essays showed little knowledge of the features of the music, or understanding of its compositional techniques used in relation to the theme of Time and Place.

All three questions in **Section C** provided some full and well referenced answers. In the best essays candidates were able to show themselves to be knowledgeable and thoughtful musicians, able to give extensive accounts with a clear point of view. Some of these stronger essays were further illustrated with notated quotations. Weaker answers wrote in more general terms, or perhaps showed some misunderstanding of the thrust of the question, and essays were often less well illustrated with references to music or performers.

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<p>Paper 9483/13 Listening</p>
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Paper 9483/02
Practical Music

Key messages

- In Element 1 (Performing), candidates should perform pieces that are well within their technical capabilities and not over-stretch themselves with music that is too difficult for them
- In Element 2 (Composing) it is essential that candidates cite their listening influences in the Written Statement.
- Do use the box on the Working Mark Sheets to add comments in support of the marks awarded.
- Please name all files and tracks on USBs and CDs.

General comments

Once again, this has been a very enjoyable season and Moderators would like to commend all assessors for their hard work in teaching, recording and marking 02 submissions. We have viewed some delightful performances, listened to some imaginative compositions, and read some very insightful comments in support of marks awarded. We are fully aware that recordings have often been produced under uniquely challenging circumstances and the effort that has gone into this is greatly appreciated. We had candidates recording performances at home with teachers simultaneously dialling in to assess live; accompanists recording customised backing tracks for their candidates and candidates recording their compositions 'live' via online networking. We are pleased to report that the overall standard of the unit is commensurate with previous series and Moderators are so grateful for everyone's determination to make this happen. Thank you!

Most Element 1 performances were carefully prepared, and the range of music presented was as diverse as ever. Overall, singing was the most popular activity, but we saw virtually every orchestral and pop instrument, as well as organ, sitar and folk harp, in a huge range of styles and genres. The best submissions were those where the candidate clearly knew the music well; they were not playing at the absolute limit of their technical ability (we are not looking for virtuoso repertoire at this level), and they demonstrated a range of skills in contrasting pieces. Perhaps because many candidates recorded at home, there were more examples of self-accompanied vocal performances than in previous seasons. Whilst only one instrument should be assessed, a well-co-ordinated account can certainly be rewarded with an appropriate mark in Assessment Criterion D (Interpretation and aural awareness).

Centres are reminded that the submission does not have to be recorded all at once, indeed the outcome may be better if items are recorded when they are ready, rather than at the very end of the course. One or two submissions were substantially longer than the required 6 – 10 minutes: whilst candidates are not penalised for this, centres should be aware that Moderators will make their judgement after 10 minutes – so if there is the chance of an over-run, do not put the very best piece at the end. When assessing, do consider the bullet points at the top of each of the assessment criteria, which are very helpful in deciding what to take into consideration – and then adjust within the descriptors for each band. Do make candidates aware of these too: learners might even be encouraged to self-assess as part of the preparation for the final performance. Some recording equipment does not always give a true rendition of dynamic range, so do encourage candidates to be particularly attentive to expressive markings or conventions in their chosen repertoire.

Centres are becoming more attuned to the requirements of Element 2, and Moderators were delighted to listen to some stunning composition folios. Candidates composed in many genres – everything from World Music to minimalism, and there were a significant number of live performances; some even driven by changed circumstances. The first port of call for the Moderator is the compulsory written statements, which we read before listening to the submission. Whilst these do not have to be long (300 words maximum for each piece), they **must** cite relevant listening influences. Candidates should be encouraged to assimilate –

and learn from – a range of styles and structures before they commence their own work. This does not have to result in a pastiche composition, but targeted listening does instil confidence in young composers, as well as providing exemplars of appropriate techniques, textures and structures that they can carry forward into their own work.

Because timings for the two compositions are necessarily quite short, some structures worked better than others. Binary or ternary form yes; sonata or variation form possibly not. Some compositions started well, and then flagged in the middle, because of a lack of understanding of how ideas can be refined or developed. Others would have benefited from changes in texture – for example, a duet for violin and piano where the piano merely accompanied the violin throughout, with root position closed chords in the bass clef, did not score highly in Assessment Criterion C (Use of Medium and Texture). Most candidates use a score-writing program to produce the score – do stress that dynamics and expression are an organic part of the compositional process rather than something to be added (or not) at the end. Most programs have some sort of mixing facility, and many candidates would have benefited from experimenting with this to ensure that important instruments were not drowned out at crucial moments. This could also be profitably discussed in the written statement. It is fine for teachers to discuss issues of balance with candidates prior to submission, and assessors should take the final mix into consideration (if appropriate) in Assessment Criterion D (Communication). Candidates who do not submit a music score should cover points of this nature in their **detailed** account of the compositional origins and processes. Track timings are always helpful and screen shots of the program at significant moments can be useful too. Some centres needed to be reminded that compositions must be for more than one instrument.

Moderators were grateful to receive some very carefully presented submissions. However, assessors are advised to check the following before sending their work:

- Candidates should state their name and candidate number at the beginning of Element 1 recordings. A verbal description of the features of the repertoire is no longer necessary.
- If a sample of candidates is required (over 6 candidates), please included the top and bottom in the rank order and an even spread over the rest of the marks. If the lowest-marked candidate is anomalous in some way (for example, they have only submitted one Element), then please send the candidate above them in the ranking too.
- Please check the audibility of recordings – one or two candidates were difficult to moderate for this reason.
- Signed Cover Sheets should be included with each candidate's work.
- Please sign and date the Working Mark Sheets and CASF form.
- Please check that all the Element 1 scores are included, and that Element 2 scores are complete, and in the right order.
- Please retain copies of all paperwork and recordings until the end of the examination period.

MUSIC

Paper 9483/03
Extended Performance

Key messages

- The music chosen for performance should reflect a single well-defined focus
- Carefully selected audio extracts should be submitted to support written comments in the Research Report

General comments

Most candidates had prepared well for this component, with some demonstrating a high level of accomplishment and all reaching at least a satisfactory standard. There were outstanding performances on piano, saxophone, viola, violin and voice.

Candidates are required to identify a focus for their performance in this component and a wide range of suitable repertoire choices were made this series. Some candidates explored the music of a single composer: examples being arias from Handel's 'Messiah', Mozart piano sonatas, Schumann Romances for oboe and the jazz music of Charlie Parker for saxophone. Others considered a genre of music: examples included fanfares for trumpet, English art songs of the 1900s, Baroque music for 'cello, love songs in musicals of the late twentieth century and jazz-funk for bass guitar. Some candidates, however, selected repertoire without due attention to how individual pieces might be linked by a single focus, or presented their submission as 'music through the ages'. Candidates should develop in-depth understanding of music which is related by a common theme, style or purpose which should be specific rather than wide-ranging.

Most candidates approached preparation of the Research Report in an appropriate manner, ensuring that they incorporated all the required aspects. The report should identify the chosen focus and explain the choice of repertoire for the Extended Performance programme. Two performances of one of the pieces from the programme should be compared. Candidates should examine the music and evaluate the two interpretations in detail and should reflect on how this impacts on their own performance. Most candidates compared two performances, but some wrote in only very general terms and/or reflected only very briefly on how their own performance decisions might be impacted. Some chose performances of unconvincing quality, thus limiting their opportunity to discuss interpretation. Instead, they merely commented on shortcomings in the accuracy of the performances heard. Where possible, candidates should select performances by established artists from whom they might appreciate details of interpretation in their chosen repertoire. In order to access the highest mark bands in the assessment criteria, candidates should compare a range of musical aspects and should refer to specific moments in the performances. Carefully selected audio extracts from the chosen recordings should be submitted to support written comments. These should be included on CD or USB and should be of sufficient length to demonstrate the point made. Tracks should be carefully labelled so that they match references in the text. Submission of such audio tracks is a requirement; mere links to full website performances is not sufficient. Most candidates included the required bibliography and discography. The content of such documentation, as well the relevance of the audio extracts, is taken into account when assessing the report.

The repertoire chosen for performance was, for the most part, well suited to candidates' capabilities and gave them an opportunity to demonstrate the full range of musical skills required by the assessment criteria.

There was a good approach to the actual Extended Performance occasion this series with almost all candidates presenting their programme as if to an audience and performing with a real sense of purpose. Of course, many candidates faced restrictions but made considerable effort to ensure performance spaces, however small, were suitable arranged and cameras/microphones appropriately placed. Backing tracks were used effectively when it was not possible to perform with other live musicians.

Most centres organised their candidates' work in a way which was easy to manage and included all the required items in their submission.

MUSIC

<p>Paper 9483/04 Extended Composition</p>

Key messages

- Candidates and teachers have continued to work with application and determination to provide the best learning conditions possible, despite many remaining challenges.
- Candidates should be meticulous in compiling their composing work carefully for submission, (including audio recordings) ensuring the work is complete.
- Many candidates could significantly improve their overall assessment outcomes by adhering to the syllabus guidelines regarding the Research report.
- Please use the latest authentication cover sheet available on the Cambridge website.
- Materials for different components must never be mixed in a single submission.

General comments

Higher achieving candidates provided evidence of some sophisticated explorations across the elements of composing. Teacher suggestions on drafts were often very useful, using precise questions to get a candidate to rethink a general concept or more specific passages of their work.

Weaker tonal work frequently demonstrated a restrictive approach to the range of keys or modes used. Jazz and Pop-based pieces evidence a strong understanding of idiomatic style but less successful pieces got 'stuck' on a 4-bar pattern.

Carelessness of presentation was observed in a significant minority of candidates' work. Pages or whole movements of scores were missing; CDs did not contain the items described on the track list.

Comments on specific tasks

A Research report

Evidence suggested that some reports were hastily compiled, rather short and they did not contain the scope of content required in the syllabus.

It is perhaps significant that many candidates headed their reports with titles such as 'music essay' or 'commentary' which revealed a limited understanding of the aim of the report. Very few reports contained 'reflective thinking'.

The Research report should be viewed as a formal, scholarly summary of research undertaken in support of the composing work. The points candidates are expected to cover are fully documented in the syllabus and summarised in the assessment criteria:

Candidates are credited for:

- organising their research into a detailed, coherent and reflective report
- acknowledging influences on their research, and analysing the importance of these influences
- demonstrating their thinking about the development of the composition
- documenting their report carefully with relevant sources, including any other contextual material.

The role of the 'journal' in documenting details of relevant listening, intentions, formulation of ideas, progress, refinements, difficulties encountered, personal insight gained, etc. cannot be overstated. The task of compiling the Research report towards the end of the assignment is made much more straightforward when journaling has been conscientiously done.

Better reports talked about original ideas and how they were changed but did not fully relate outcomes to intentions. Weaker reports failed to mention any listening influences and often talked of the drama and excitement in what amounted to very basic material.

Candidates are advised that whilst explanations of personal emotional responses or religious statements may be relevant to the genesis of a composition, they cannot replace investigative research. Candidates using colour coded formats should print their work in colour.

Audio examples were variable in quality and relevance. Details of performers/sources were minimal, and some candidates merely provided links with location timings, indicating that the reader should locate the audio extracts for themselves. Candidates must provide the reader with a complete and self-contained document with accompanying audio extracts.

Audio extracts

Presentation of audio examples was variable. There were some very precise excerpts with clear relevance to the composing work but less helpfully, there were also many long extracts or entire movements offering a generic/stylistic connection, but nothing more.

A formal approach to scholarly presentation is expected. A candidate sharing a link to their own Spotify playlist so the examiner could get 'an idea of what I like listening to' was inappropriate.

- Remember to include a playlist.
- Ensure all references text of the report connect to appropriate bibliographic references etc.
- Full details of performances including performers/conductor/artists are required.
- Always check the recordings are present on the CD. Examiners continue to report submissions of blank/damaged/incomplete CDs.

Candidates are reminded that they are required to provide a word count for this document. Twenty per cent of the total marks are allocated to this part of the task and it was disappointing to observe strong compositional submissions where the marks were compromised overall because of comparatively weak reports.

B Shaping of Ideas; structure

Drawing on a range of styles, traditions and genres, many candidates showed ingenuity, artistry and crafting skills in formulating and shaping their ideas. Evidence of the influence of 'world musics' was prevalent. Starting from music of interest to the candidate is always good practice but candidates must also explore further repertoire.

Placing ideas within a structure took many forms. Two contrasting movements within a coherent whole was one example; inspiration from nature or other programmatic ideas were popular. Submission of two or three songs within a linked 'album' theme worked successfully but compositions with multiple styles and changing instrumental forces often failed to demonstrate mastery in any one field.

Some candidates worked successfully with electronic resources, giving important and necessary detail about 'found sounds' and manipulation processes whilst naming equipment and programmes used. It is important in this context to consider the difference between 'sound design' and 'music'. The mention of pitch, rhythm and harmony in the assessment criteria gives some clear guidance.

A composition of almost 12-minutes was well outside the parameters of an overall structure. Candidates are sometimes reluctant to 'prune' their work but this willingness to refine the use of ideas almost always leads to improvement overall.

'Borrowing'

Some candidates legitimately incorporated the ideas of other composers as part of their own work, fully acknowledging the source material. Candidates should be aware that they do not receive credit for the borrowed materials but are rewarded for the way these ideas are explored and utilised in the candidate's own authentic composing voice.

In weaker examples, restriction in harmonic invention or development was noted when, for example, composing was based on a precise chord sequence of four or six chords from an identified song.

C Working with ideas; the use of compositional techniques

Through their research, many candidates demonstrated that by analysing a range of techniques used by other composers, they were able to apply this learning in their own work.

Occasionally candidates submitted work that amounted to little more than ‘doodling’ at the keyboard, presenting improvisation as their offering. This approach demonstrates performance, rather than composing skill. Whilst initial ideas may be generated by improvising in this way, under this assessment criteria, candidates are rewarded for their ability to polish, use and often develop their ideas in a deliberate and purposeful way. They regularly demonstrate an understanding of techniques prompted by learning in the Listening Paper analysis of set works as well as extending their interest here or in the music of others as part of the research.

D Use of medium and texture

The choice of resources through which to express ideas is an integral part of the composing decision-making process. For some candidates, considerable research informed their relative effectiveness in writing for voice(s) or instruments idiomatically.

Exploration of electro-acoustic resources was fruitful for several candidates but so too was the exploration of extended possibilities using more conventional instruments. Writing for strings, for example, candidates incorporated a comprehensive range of techniques frequently found in music from 1950 onwards.

E Communication

Recording

An advantage of live recording is the opportunity to show that the music really does work for the forces intended. Research reports often referred to the way in which consultation with teachers/peers helped to inform the candidate of idiomatic ways of working with instruments with which they may be less familiar.

Singing on several recordings, both choral and solo, was impressive. Teachers and candidates went to considerable lengths to rehearse/over dub parts and mix down to a worthy representation of the composer’s intentions.

Recordings derived from a range of notation programmes were rather bland overall. A range of freely available software can help to give MIDI a greater sense of realism. A few recordings had major balance problems – the final mixing of MIDI tracks to stereo is a vital part of the process. Candidates must not submit MIDI files as a substitute for conventional stereo recordings.

It is, nevertheless, possible to gain maximum credit for a well edited ‘performance’ using technology and some fine examples were noted by examiners.

A lack of notation for jazz solo passages is always problematic. Improvisation of an unspecified instrumentalist heard on a recording, for example, cannot be credited to the composer.

Score

Candidates provided appropriate scores to document their composing work. Sometimes this involved the use of graphic scores or bespoke representations with comprehensive explanation for interpretation of symbols.

In traditional scores candidates must follow layout conventions where staves are grouped by instrumental family and hierarchy of pitch range.

Candidates could vastly improve the layout of their scores by using the ‘Hide empty staff’ facility after the first page, where all forces must be accounted whether in use or not. Some scores amounted to 50–90 pages of single side printing, sometime with only a single bar per page. Others were microscopically small.

Candidates should employ a sensible pragmatic approach.

Sometimes it was clear that the use of notation programmes directly shaped the composing ideas and non-idiomatic writing was evidenced in music written for guitar, banjo, harp, jazz saxophone, for example.

Candidates should check their final scores for sensible use of dynamic, phrasing and articulation markings. They should ensure accuracy of rhythmic grouping of notes and rests and ensure accurate spelling of pitches.

Concluding remarks

Thanks are due once again for the support given to candidates in realising the intentions of their creative work. The feedback of teachers and peers through the process can be an invaluable source of comment for candidates to reflect upon.

MUSIC

<p>Paper 9483/05 Investigating Music</p>
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Key messages

- Centres should follow Cambridge International guidance for the correct submission of documentation in this component. Materials from multiple components **must not** be combined.
- Please use the most recent coversheet to authenticate and give details of the work. It is important to complete the second box where you are asked to provide a summary outline of the work submitted for either of components 03 or 04.
- References to written sources, audio and other research materials must be presented with full details of authors/composers, performers, date of access for web-based references, etc.

General comments

Examiners saw some impressive and committed work from candidates who understood the requirements in this component. For other candidates there was little evidence of the breadth of investigation required at this level. Centres can access previous Principal Examiner Reports containing useful advice and giving a broader picture of candidate performance across examination series.

Centres are reminded that candidates should avoid choosing themes for investigation that are not music centred. The syllabus makes it clear that a body of music listening and analysis is an essential requirement in order to fulfil the requirements of the assessment criteria. Many candidates chose to research, for example, the connections between psychology, mental health, philosophy, politics, and various ideologies with music; in order to meet the requirements for this component, it is essential to ensure that the investigation of **music** remains the central focus of the work.

Candidates can choose to present their findings in several ways such as through annotated scores and charts/diagrams as well as prose writing to support and explain their findings. They must, however, maintain a formal approach to this scholarly work. In strong writing, personal responses and enthusiasms were conveyed with a good measure of objectivity, particularly as candidates reflected on their work. Some weaker writing over-used statements such as '*I love this music so much...*' with little attempt to explain or expand upon their subjective responses.

A Reflective statement

In many submissions there was insufficient understanding of the requirements here. Worth twenty per cent of the total marks available, the reflective statement must be presented as a separate document to the main essay and specifically address the points mentioned in the syllabus. These are summarised in the header to the assessment criteria.

Whilst 'reflection' implies a looking back, the statement is required to be much more than a conclusion or summary. It may include this, but it should be informed by on-going 'journaling', for example, to log important sources, note reference details, track the progress of research, and note personal observations and reflections throughout the entire research process.

Candidates should note the relative word counts suggested for the written submissions.

Reflective statement: up to 500 words
Essay: 2500 – 3000 words

Candidates should provide a word count for their work. Some candidates presented a single document with a mixture of research and reflection, and this is not acceptable in order to meet the requirements of the component.

Stronger statements included evidence of the candidate's ability to process and filter information, including objective analysis of the candidate's own research process. Several candidates attested to the value of investing time in learning how to use various software tools that helped them organise their on-going work including keeping track of a full range of references. Curiosity and enthusiasm in candidates were often demonstrated in an increasing ability to 'notice' and make independent judgements in response to the evidence gathered from authentic sources.

B Listening

Although there is scope in the main essay to present passages taken from music scores or to include annotated scores, for example, as reference material in an appendix, it is the inclusion of edited audio tracks which give examiners vital clues to evidence the way a candidate is listening and hearing. The syllabus header for these assessment criteria makes clear that supporting recorded extracts must be included. Some candidates provided whole movements or works with timings, but examiners should not be expected to access YouTube links, for example. This component must be presented as a complete whole with all candidate evidence included.

Many candidates omitted to provide the following essential requirements relating to their listening:

- an accurate track list
- detailed references for each item of listening including performers, composers, producers, sources and where appropriate, dates of access.

C Contextual Understanding

This was an area where candidates often excelled, making clear how investigating contextual matters aided their overall understanding of the music at the centre of their research. Sometimes this aspect of the work was given rather too much prominence in relation to other areas of the research.

D Analytic/investigative techniques and technical vocabulary

The way in which the selected body of music is investigated lies at the heart of the work. Some candidates benefitted from working through publications that included both general and close analysis by recognised 'authorities' in their field. This, together with technical vocabulary learned in the Listening Paper analyses, gave candidates confidence to apply themselves to investigation of further music in a more independent way. Teachers can help advise their candidates in locating well-regarded source material. This can be particularly important with web-based materials, where it may be more challenging to differentiate between fan-generated material, writing based on little more than personal opinion, and more objective, scholarly material.

E Communication and substantiation of judgements

A few practical points are given here.

- A good way to concisely provide an immediate, organised overview of the research is to include a contents page.
- Candidates should be discerning in the selection of sections of scores where appropriate and only include material that is useful in establishing the point being made.
- Referencing must be logical, accurate and easy to follow whichever method is used.
- Screenshots of music are of little value if they do not contain clefs or key signatures. Re-notation of specific bars is often required.
- YouTube references are a valuable source of performance material across all styles and traditions, but full performance details MUST be given in the discography and/or reference list.
- Candidates should be advised to carefully read through their final text. They should not leave 'instructions to self' or other notes in the main body of their essay.
- Candidates should aim for clarity and coherence in communicating and presenting their findings.