

MUSIC

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-14	15-31	32-46	47-57	58-69	70-80	81-100

Standard level group performing

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-14	15-30	31-50	51-61	62-69	70-80	81-100

Standard level solo performing

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-14	15-30	31-48	49-59	60-71	72-82	83-100

Standard level creating

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-15	16-31	32-47	48-58	59-69	70-80	81-100

Solo performing (HL/SLS)

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-3	4-7	8-11	12-13	14-16	17-18	19-20

The range and suitability of the work submitted

A wide range of instrumentation, genres and performance standards was received. Western classical music repertoire from the 19th and 20th centuries prevailed together with jazz selections and other contemporary popular music. A good number of recitals demonstrated breadth of exploration, musical understanding and the development of informed and engaging

performing skills. There is a commendable effort in many schools to lead the candidates through a comprehensive study of repertoire and performing possibilities. It is clear that much of this musical learning has been challenging and stimulating and that it supports the development of qualities in the IB Learner Profile. The candidates demonstrated understanding of the subtle or marked differences in expression in music from different genres, traditions, places and times and worked diligently to communicate them. Several other submissions were conservative in their repertoire and a few did not reach an adequate standard. Sensitive accompaniment was provided in the main, although some centres failed to provide it for the performances, or provided one of low quality which lowered the candidates' marks.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

Programmes were generally appropriate, with contrasting repertoire well chosen for the ability level of most candidates. Accompaniment guidelines were mostly followed, an improvement over past years, although some schools did not. Some candidates attempted to perform a repertoire beyond their capabilities and a few others were not exposed to an adequate range of styles or given technical or interpretative challenges. Some pieces were too short or basic to allow for adequate demonstration of understanding or skills. Several recitals demonstrated exquisite musicianship and range.

Criterion B

Technical control ranged between mostly adequate to consistent. A few candidates did not demonstrate adequate attention to relevant detail. There were several instances of very fine playing.

Criterion C

Stylistic understanding is still an elusive aspect to many selections. Attention to detail and informed preparation levels vary significantly between candidates and centres. The entire range of levels was achieved.

Criterion D

The entire range was demonstrated in terms of musical communication: impressive to non-existent. Some recitals were of a standard well beyond what is expected for the age range. It is evident that some centres have some very fine teaching and learning for the component. Some centres, however, would benefit from supporting a much more informed and rigorous preparation - the performances did not demonstrate enough musical skills, care or attention.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Schools must ensure the recitals are in audio CD format and not sent on data disks. Submissions should be tested for playback quality on regular CD players. The candidate name and session number must be written on each CD, not just on the case. It is important that cover sheets are filled in carefully and completely. The pieces must be

listed in the same order as on the recording. It is imperative accompaniment is provided when a piece requires it. The accompaniment should be accurately prepared and the recording balanced so that the candidate's part is prominently heard. Pianos must be freshly tuned. Probably the most important aspect of a performance submission depends on the selection of repertoire. Schools are recommended to select pieces that the candidates can master to demonstrate exposure and understanding of contrast in musical content and attentive preparation of suitable technical and stylistic challenges.

Group performing (SLG)

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-3	4-7	8-12	13-14	15-15	16-17	18-20

The range and suitability of the work submitted

There were many examples of performances by superior groups - some excellent concert bands and choirs in particular and some fluent jazz groups where it is encouraging to hear the confidence in improvisation from the performers.

Overall, programmes included contrasted works that were suitable to the group's abilities. However, it is important to reiterate that the guidelines for group performing are not met when the submission includes smaller groups extracted from a larger group (for example; orchestra to string quartet, or SATB choir to women's chamber choir).

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

There were many well structured programmes which matched the abilities of the candidates very well. Care should be taken with over ambitious programming at times, and with the issue of mixed ensembles.

Criterion B

In respect of the technical aspects of performance, group performing presents a number of issues. With a large number of candidates to shape into a whole, aspects such as consistent tone production, matching articulation, intonation and good control of the pulse and rhythmic subdivisions become highlighted. The better groups comprised candidates of well matched abilities, with strong direction and a common musical purpose.

Criterion C

Generally, style was well understood, it not always executed convincingly. More focus on the stylistic differences and the techniques required to portray them will benefit performances.

Criterion D

Whilst most of the submissions demonstrated enthusiasm and a degree of commitment to the performance, this does not always ensure full marks for this criterion. However, the energy and commitment which imbued many of the submissions was a pleasure to hear and this is fine testimony to the time and effort that goes into the preparation of the music, from both teachers and candidates.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should continue to focus on the stylistic differences and associated technical requirements between works presented in the programme.

Continue to attend to the basic fundamentals of musicianship - absolute control of rhythmic pulse and subdivision, attention to the musical line and direction, care with intonation and tonal control, and good breathing and bowing practice.

Further comments

Teachers are reminded of the guidelines as set out in the music guide. There appears to be an increasing deviation from the requirements, under the general umbrella of group performing. There were a number of instances when candidates were presented in a variety of groups (for example; symphonic wind band, and jazz combo, or in some cases, as a soloist with different backing groups). The group must be the same and must be assessed as a whole, not for individual candidate contribution.

It is also important that there is some evidence of a live audience in order to clearly fulfil the requirements as specified in the guide. Teachers are requested to take care with recordings because recording quality and microphone placement impact on the quality of the recordings.

Creating (HL/SLC)

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-5	6-11	12-16	17-19	20-23	24-26	27-30

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The range of work was from weak to very good although there were very few really poor entries. Work ranged from pop songs to orchestral compositions with the majority seeming to opt for small group situations. There was no particular correlation between quality and genre - good work was present equally among rock and “classical” submissions. Slightly fewer improvisations were present and these were usually in the form of an instrumental solo in a group context. Submissions for stylistic techniques appear to have been better prepared in this session. Music technology submissions included some good pieces of work and there were fewer cases of simple rock song demos presented as technology. Arrangements were sometimes at risk of being simple transcriptions from one instrumentation to another. It should be remembered that examiners will be looking to award marks for creative arranging.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

More successful entries were those that understood the need to vary and develop material instead of just repeating it. Weaker entries often include little or no development of material and uneven textures where, for example, instrumental parts would come to an abrupt stop; a quartet might suddenly drop from four to two voices for no apparent reason. There is still a tendency for those writing “metal” pieces to neglect melodic content, often presenting very well crafted accompaniments that seem to be songs with a vocal line that still needs to be added. Those presenting stylistic techniques were generally better prepared in this session although there were still those who failed to address the basic requirements (modulations, imitation) stated in the guide. Pieces setting out to be “minimalist” often started well but failed to achieve any degree of contrast or development by means of phasing or metamorphosis of the elements. Weaker compositions stayed in the same key from start to finish. Modern music tends to use key change more than modulation, and some candidates presented sections in contrasting keys; this was sometimes effective but sometimes evidently a use of copy and paste with transposition, and little care taken to adapt the parts to the new tonality.

Criterion B

Pieces were on the whole quite well structured, often employing simple but practical binary and ternary forms, or song forms in the case of pop/rock submissions. Candidates mostly understood the need to have some stylistic integrity in their works.

Criterion C

There were some good instances of idiomatic writing and few cases of parts that were unplayable for their stated instruments. Technology submissions scored generally adequate marks for this criterion but there were only a few cases of really excellent exploitation of software.

Criterion D

Some very well presented scores. Many candidates failed to achieve higher marks because of neglecting fundamental instructions such as tempo or dynamics. It is generally better to present instruments that normally transpose with their parts in the appropriate transposed keys. Care should also be taken, in the labelling of staves, that when the instrument is designated “Clarinet in Bb” the part should be in Bb. In technology submissions sound quality was usually well handled, particularly when the work was electronically conceived from the start. Rock songs presented as music technology tended to have adequate but not excellent sound quality. Improvisations, tending to stay in the solo-in-a-group format, were generally competent but sometimes lacked the elements of surprise or “risk taking”, tending to slot into their comfort zones.

Criterion E

Some good communicative work. Lower marks were scored here by submissions that had little content, simply reiterating a few ideas and lacking a sense of direction.

Criterion F

Reflections were better in this session. Most candidates understood the need to address intention, process and outcome, but this last element was often limited to a simple statement of satisfaction with the work. Some reflection on what has been learned, what they would do differently if they were to do the work again would have helped here. There were some who gave a long and often detailed description of the work, but this was not always reflective. It should be remembered that the task is not simply to present an analysis of the piece although this information can be useful.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates wishing to present stylistic techniques should be made aware of the requirements of the task (e.g. modulations, imitation). Those presenting pop songs should remember the need to develop or vary the musical material, as merely repeating the same music with different words is not considered musical development. Compositions in jazz style should try to present the score as fully as possible. Where a solo is intended, a transcription of a possible solo will score better than a series of chord symbols. Where possible, candidates could be encouraged to read through their scores horizontally following each part individually to see if it makes sense to a potential performer, if it is playable, and that it does not just drop in and out randomly. There was a marked difference between candidates with some preparation in the use and understanding of harmony and those who were employing a try-it-and-see approach. Those using what they had learned from personal instrumental activity were often inclined to include imperfections such as finishing on a second inversion – implying they had some idea of triadic harmony but no real knowledge of its function.

A simple ternary form can be achieved by pasting a copy of the first section at the end of a second section. Although this can be effective, the simple addition of a coda or an alternative ending can be much more communicative. The software makes the process easier but the additional application of some creativity achieves greater expression. Candidates should be reminded that variety in the portfolio will be awarded. This does not preclude presenting three compositions, but it is better if they have some variety, which can be in style or instrumentation.

Paper 1 (Listening paper) (HL)

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-15	16-35	36-48	49-62	63-76	77-89	90-140

Paper 1 (Listening paper) (SLS, SLG, SLC)

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-11	12-22	23-38	39-48	49-57	58-67	68-100

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for candidates

One of the purposes of section A of the listening paper is to allow candidates to demonstrate critical thinking. This can hardly be demonstrated by stating memorized facts without the help of reasoned arguments. Unfortunately, several responses in section A followed the strategy to present memorized points that, at times, did not even relate to the specific question. In general, only those responses that showed critical thinking through well-reasoned arguments supported by well-located examples attained high marks.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

The candidates demonstrated good understanding of the prescribed works (despite the fact that in some instances they did not directly address the question). The aspect of 'critical thinking', mostly required in sections A and C is probably the area that needs more work. Candidates seem to be good at memorizing but not as good as thinking critically to build arguments and to exactly address the questions.

The strengths and weaknesses of candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Question 1

Some candidates clearly identified the 'distinctive' elements of the rhythm. However, a large number of candidates were challenged by this question. In general they described basic rhythmic features but nothing 'distinctive' as the question asked.

Question 2

Here the main challenge was the concept of 'material' in the question "borrowed material". Many candidates interpreted "in the style of" as borrowed material. Once more, some candidates gave proof of good understanding. However, following the indications mentioned above, these candidates did not gain marks as they would have received in previous years (since 2011).

Question 3

Here the main challenge was the concept of 'colour'. Following the music guide, the concept was associated to timbre. This left out many candidates that took a larger concept of the term

(including rhythm, tessitura, etc). As with the other questions of section A, candidates who did not precisely adhere to the 'timbre' concept of colour did not receive marks.

Question 4

In general, candidates presented good answers to this question. Most candidates declared that the piece was Romantic or Post-romantic. They identified instruments, meter, tonality etc. Form was more elusive and, despite of the fact they indicated Romantic or Post-romantic, they did not add much more comments in context.

Question 5

Probably the best answer from the examination. The only grey area for this question was form.

Question 6

Candidates in general identified the musical elements but were timid in establishing a fusion and the implication that it had. They declared a single meter or tonality when the piece had different sections with contrasting characteristics.

Question 7

Mariachi was too often the culture identified by the candidates. Otherwise, in criteria A, B and C the answers were from satisfactory to good.

Question 8

This was probably the weakest answer from the whole test. Candidates did find links but, for the most part, these were unsubstantial as the examinations instructions require.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers are encouraged to develop critical thinking among their candidates. Memorization by itself is never enough to obtain high marks in the exams and, of course, it is not an IB goal.

Musical Links Investigation (HL, SLS, SLG, SLC)

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-14	15-17	18-20

The range and suitability of the work submitted

In general, the choice of musical cultures was more successful; however the quality of chosen links could be stronger, bearing in mind the emphasis in criterion A that links allow for sustained investigation. The stronger MLIs showed an ability to compare and contrast, where the main focus of the discussion is on the links, but depth and breadth is added with discussion of more than two elements. Candidates who present work of fewer than 400 words

cannot show any depth or detail, and therefore cannot meet the criteria. Weaker candidates did not support statements with evidence from the musical examples or with reference to any source material and often had limited or no source material. Where candidates spend a significant number of words on context or historical background, this limits their words to use in analysis and supporting evidence.

It is pleasing to see true world music examples (and a wider range of musical cultures, often quite imaginative) being used as well as music from candidates' own cultural backgrounds in comparison with music from another significant musical culture.

Finally, the issue of referencing is significant. If a candidate's investigation does not include an acknowledgment of all sources (which suggests plagiarism), the candidate will be investigated for possible academic misconduct.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

There were some interesting and imaginative choices of distinct musical cultures and this aspect of the MLI which has proved troublesome in previous years appears to be clearer and better handled in general. There were still several candidates who assumed that country defines culture, or who chose musical examples where one was heavily influenced by the other, which limits the potential for comparison.

Links were an issue in some cases although improved compared with previous years. More thought can be given to the specific nature of chosen links - for example, to state "rhythm" as a link without specific reference to an aspect of the musical element (for example; ostinato or syncopation) is vague and limits the potential for detailed analysis.

Criterion B

There were some excellent descriptions of links, however, with little regard for other musical elements and as a result the requirement to contrast as well as compare similarities was overlooked. The better investigations were able to support every statement with evidence from the musical examples being investigated.

Criterion C

There were many examples of excellent use of terminology, backed up by examples from the pieces, which demonstrated understanding and application of the musical terms. Candidates could be encouraged to avoid generalities and take care not to rely on boxes with "glossaries" of terms which are either not specific to the musical examples or are not followed through in discussion. Citing a list of terms does not in itself show understanding.

Criterion D

While there were some fine examples of carefully thought out presentation, particularly in magazine, web-site and blog formats, there are still many examples of general "essay" presentations or radio shows that use up a large amount of the available word count in general chit-chat. The size of font in some cases was an issue for examiners – candidates must be mindful that scripts need to be easy to see, and small print or coloured text on a dark background is often very hard to read.

Referencing on the whole was not well done. The better scripts used footnotes or references within the body of the text, especially when quoting directly. Wikipedia continues to be used although it is not an authentic reference source.

Musical examples need to be fully labelled and it is helpful if the point they are supporting is highlighted in some way. In addition musical examples do not make sense, nor are they accurate if clefs and key signatures are not provided. There is still a tendency for candidates to be careless in this respect.

Criterion E

The success of candidates in this criterion was mixed. The better candidates clearly understood the task and showed a personal engagement with the process which engaged the reader/audience. Where higher marks were obtained this was due to in-depth thought of what should be communicated to make a knowledgeable and interesting read which flowed well.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

The choice of distinct cultures is generally being handled better, helped by workshops, the OCC and the further clarification document.

Candidates could be reminded that just listing the musical elements (in a template format) does not allow them to show a great deal of creative thinking, or intellectual initiative (Criterion E). In addition, a reminder to avoid excessive historical or social contextual background might be useful - rather, focus more on the characteristics of the musical culture with detailed supporting evidence from the chosen works that highlight the musical links.

Ensure that care is taken with inserting written musical examples into the scripts. Often clefs and key signatures are omitted, creating inaccuracies in the musical evidence.

Make sure that the chosen works are clear representations of the musical cultures. Occasionally there were misconceptions, for example, choosing a Chinese "style" piano piece which is, in essence, Western (influenced by Chinese tonalities or idioms, but not actually Chinese).

It is important that teachers review the criteria with their candidates so that the expectations of the MLI are clear and in preparation for the task perhaps embark on some short "links type" papers as a trial run.

Emphasis on analysis and comparison skills is vital and both teachers and candidates should be aware that the essence of the music needs in depth analysis and the choice of media script is vital. Will it support the MLI requirements?