2021 Music Performance — Ensemble Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the 2021 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: Performance

Students present an ensemble performance or set of performances to a maximum of 6–8 minutes, of a single work or a set of works by one or more composers, and individual evidence of each student’s contribution to the chosen ensemble through individual part-testing.

The more successful responses commonly:

* submitted part test-videos of approximately 2 minutes, for each individual student
* included part tests that interrogated aspects of the repertoire, to showcase the student’s ability to interpret dynamics, articulations, phrasing, tone control and a range of technical skills
* displayed evidence of complexity through a variety of musical elements within the chosen repertoire
* showcased a very high level of understanding and application of style within the performance and part test
* presented a range of works that demonstrated the breadth and depth of the student’s musical and stylistic understanding and skills
* were familiar with process of part testing and had evidently completed formative part tests as part of their preparation
* demonstrated consistent control of tone and dynamics, intonation and technical fluency in the performance and the part test.

The less successful responses commonly:

* did not include a separate part-test video for each individual student
* presented chosen works that did not allow students to demonstrate a wide variety of techniques or skills on their instrument
* presented repertoire that did not allow students to demonstrate evidence of achievement within the higher grade bands
* lacked technical fluency within the performance of the repertoire
* lacked an understanding of the stylistic aspects of the repertoire
* performed parts that were not within their range i.e. vocalists singing in an inappropriate key
* lacked confidence or appeared to be unfamiliar with the requirements of the part test.

Additional advice for teachers

* Remember that moderators are the audience who will view the videos of students’ performances and part tests. Teachers should ensure that all students in the moderation sample can be clearly identified in all videos by moderators who are unfamiliar with the class of students.
* Ensure that all students are clearly labelled in videos so moderators can identify each student in each video, (using arrows or similar — see PLATO Clarifying examples — and/or headshots or position descriptions).
* Submit each student’s individual part-test video on a separate file.
* Ensure students are clearly visible and not obscured within performance and part test videos. Multiple angles may be required for large ensembles. Smartphone/tablet video recording quality should sufficient for extra angles.
* Compress files where possible to mp4 for quicker upload and download.
* Ensure students engage in a number of formative performance and part testing opportunities leading up to their assessment.
* Ensure instruments are tuned and audio sound checks are completed prior to recording the performance(s).

Assessment Type 2: Performance and Discussion

For this assessment type students present an ensemble performance or set of performances to a maximum of 6–8 minutes, of a single work or a set of works by one or more composers, and individual evidence of each student’s contribution to the chosen ensemble through individual part-testing. This is accompanied by an individual discussion of key musical elements of the repertoire, with a critique of strategies to improve and refine each student’s performance to a maximum or 800 words if written, 4 minutes as an oral presentation, or the multimodal equivalent.

The more successful responses commonly:

* presented a highly fluent and cohesive performance and part test that reflected thorough preparation and understanding of their role within the ensemble
* performed with a high degree of technical skill, musicality and expression
* demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of the styles presented through a highly intuitive interpretation of the chosen repertoire
* demonstrated a high level of collaboration within the ensemble
* addressed the structural and stylistic elements of the chosen repertoire within the Discussion and how these informed the performance
* included a well-structured Discussion that focused on the analysis of a range of musical elements
* addressed within the Discussion practice strategies applied to develop and prepare their performance as an individual and member of an ensemble
* included consistent, appropriate, and highly effective use of musical terminology
* showed evidence of insightful understanding through relevant examples and annotations
* included a word count in the case of written Discussions.

The less successful responses commonly:

* lacked technical fluency and stylistic understanding within the performance of the work(s)
* included performances that did not allow the student to demonstrate a variety of techniques and skills
* did not display positive collaboration and responsiveness within the ensemble
* did not include a separate part-test video for each individual student
* did not submit the Discussion which is a requirement for Assessment Type 2
* did not submit the Discussion, which is a requirement for Assessment Type 2
* focused on a limited number of musical elements within the discussion (i.e. time signature and key signature)
* made limited use of musical terminology in relation to the Discussion
* included irrelevant information in the Discussion (refer to subject outline)
* omitted a structural and stylistic analysis of the chosen repertoire
* omitted a critique of strategies used to improve their skills, technique and accuracy of their performance in the Discussion.

Additional advice for teachers

• Please include Performance Notes Sheets in the moderation materials for each individual student.

* Teachers are reminded that in part testing, it is appropriate to give singers a note or sense of the key of the extract, but it is not acceptable for the accompaniment to continue throughout the part test.
* The part test should be long enough for the student to demonstrate their skills at their highest level. Moderators are assisted when the student is given the opportunity to clearly demonstrate their learning in a range of techniques, such as, intonation, dynamic contrasts, articulation, and maintenance of tempo and pulse.
* Teachers should maximise the student’s playing time within the part test; allow opportunities for the student to demonstrate a variety of skills and techniques on their instrument.
* Teachers are encouraged to assist students in selecting repertoire that allows for an in-depth level of discussion.
* Ensure that the Discussion is submitted in a separate file with the performance. The focus of the Discussion should be on the musical elements – particularly analysis of structure and style, and practice strategies developed by the student to improve and refine their performance(s).
* Keep in mind that moderators are the audience who will watch the videos of your students. Teachers should ensure that every student being assessed can be clearly identified in all videos.
* Ensure students understand the differences between the purpose of the Discussion in Assessment Type 2, and the Evaluation in Assessment Type 3. The Discussion focuses on analytical and stylistic features of the repertoire (RM1), and practice techniques used to develop and refine the performance given in Assessment Type 2. The Evaluation in Assessment Type 3 focuses on an evaluation and critique of the final performance and the learning undertaken throughout the year (RM2).
* Mark all of the student’s evidence for the assessment type holistically. Teachers are reminded that there is no weighting to the Discussion. Teachers can mark against the features of the criteria as indicated in the diagram below:



External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Performance Portfolio

For this assessment type students present an ensemble performance or set of performances to a maximum of 6–8 minutes, of a musical work or works, and individual evidence of each student’s contribution to the ensemble through individual part-testing. They also provide an individual evaluation of their learning journey to a maximum or 500 words if written, 3 minutes as an oral presentation, or the multimodal equivalent.

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated a high level of technique, fluency and confidence within the performance and part-test
* showed close attention to all aspects of the repertoire during the performance and part-test
* featured part tests where the students were given clear instructions within a supportive environment
* organised the content according to the requirements described in the subject outline
* addressed aspects of responsiveness and collaboration in rehearsals and performance throughout their learning in the subject, within the Evaluation within the ensemble for the performance and rehearsals, as well as how they had learnt from practice and preparation strategies prior to the performance
* evaluated what they learnt from practice and preparation strategies prior to the performance
* demonstrated astute understanding of their own and others’ roles within the ensemble performance in the and Evaluation
* included consistent, accurate and highly effective use of musical terminology in the Evaluation.

The less successful responses commonly:

* lacked technical fluency and stylistic understanding within the chosen work(s)
* included performances that did not allow the student to demonstrate a variety of techniques and skills in the higher grade bands
* lacked attention to the detail of musical indications marked on the score (where scores were provided)
* did not submit the Evaluation which is a requirement of Assessment Type 3
* included irrelevant content in the evaluation (refer to subject outline)
* did not include a separate part-test video for each individual student
* lacked depth and concise detail in relation to responsiveness and collaboration within the ensemble
* required more detail in relation to the learning that had occurred throughout the preparation for the performance, in the Evaluation.

Additional advice for teachers

* Ensure that all students are clearly labelled and identified in both the performance and part test videos by SACE registration number. The performance and part test videos should be submitted as separate files. Compress files to mp4 for quicker upload and download.
* Ensure students are clearly visible and not obscured by line of sight within the performance and part test videos. Multiple angles may be required for large ensembles. Smartphone/tablet video recording quality is sufficient for extra angles.
* Ensure students understand the differences between the purpose of the Evaluation in Assessment Type 3 and the Discussion in Assessment Type 2. While the Discussion focuses on analytical and stylistic features of the repertoire (RM1), and practice techniques used to develop and refine the performance given in Assessment Type 2. The Evaluation in Assessment Type 3 focuses on an evaluation and critique of the final performance and the learning throughout the year (RM2).

