



Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board



Cambridge Assessment
International Education

**Singapore–Cambridge General Certificate of Education
Ordinary Level (2025)**

Music (Syllabus 6085)

(Updated for examination from 2025)

This syllabus has been reviewed and revised.

|| Significant changes to the syllabus are indicated by black vertical lines either side of the text. ||

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INTRODUCTION

The syllabus is designed to engage candidates in the musical activities of Listening, Creating and Performing (in an integrated manner) while providing opportunities for candidates to follow their own musical inclinations through creating and performing music of their own choice. It is also underpinned by the understanding that an appreciation of the cultural diversity of music is vital in developing open-mindedness towards the multiplicity of musical practices. Through the syllabus, candidates have the opportunities to explore a wide range of genres and styles to broaden and develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of music. It provides the platform for candidates to make music, both individually and in groups. The syllabus lays the foundation for further study in music and endeavours to foster a lifelong appreciation and involvement in music.

AIMS

The aims of the syllabus are to:

- Develop critical thinking and musical creativity
- Develop communication, collaborative and interpretative skills in music
- Develop perception and awareness of musical cultures and traditions, both local and global
- Develop independent learners with inquiring and innovative minds through reflective practices in music
- Provide the basis for an informed and lifelong appreciation of music

FRAMEWORK

The syllabus is organised into three papers: Music Studies, Creating and Performing. Music Studies is organised by Areas of Study, which covers a wide range of musical styles and traditions to guide aural exploration through listening, analysis, creating and performing. Creating and Performing provide the necessary breadth of musical and reflective skills, equipping candidates with their articulation of their musical understanding, intentions and evaluation of their musical choices in their compositions and performances.

REQUIREMENTS

Candidates offering this syllabus must take papers **6085/1**, **6085/2** and **6085/3**.

Candidates offering this syllabus must be under the direct supervision of an O-Level music teacher in their own school or any of the approved O-Level Music Centres.

AREAS OF STUDY

The Areas of Study represent a broad selection of significant genres and traditions for musical study at O-Level. Each Area of Study is situated within specific musical traditions. Candidates will understand and appreciate the historical, social and cultural contexts of music from the following four Areas of Study:

- 1 Western Classical Tradition
- 2 Jazz
- 3 Popular Music
- 4 Asian Music

Western Classical Tradition		
Candidates will be examined on the following:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solo Instrumental Music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Baroque Dance Suite - Classical Sonata - Romantic Character Piece - 20th Century Musical Styles (Impressionism, Nationalism and Minimalism) • Chamber Music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Classical String Quartet - Romantic German Lieder (for solo voice and piano) • Symphony (from the Classical and Romantic periods) 		
Knowledge Outcomes	Skills Outcomes	Musical Elements and Concepts
<p>Candidates should be able to demonstrate understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the historical, social and cultural contexts of music in each period • the purpose for which these musics are created • the musical practice in each case 	<p>Candidates will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distinguish between the music of the different periods by examining the musical characteristics of the select genres and traditions, focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rhythm and Metre - Melody - Harmony and Tonality - Texture - Timbre, Instrumentation and Orchestration (including voice) - Instruments of the Western Orchestra (including keyboard) - Form and Structure - Relationship between words and music - Relationship between the voice(s)/ instrument(s) 	<p>Rhythm and Metre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pulse, Tempo, Simple and Compound time, Changing metres, Syncopation, Hemiola, Ostinato, Phrasing <p>Melody</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contour, Motif, Theme, Decoration (ornaments), Voice-leading, Repetition, Sequence, Variation <p>Harmony and Tonality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consonance and Dissonance, Scales, Modes, Intervals, Chord types and Inversions, Cadences, Tonality, Keys and Modulations, Standard chord progressions, Pedal, Drone, Harmonic rhythm

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Knowledge Outcomes	Skills Outcomes	Musical Elements and Concepts
		<p>Texture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monophony/Unison, Homophony, Polyphony, Doubling <p>Timbre, Instrumentation and Orchestration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Properties of instruments/voices, instrumental/vocal techniques and performance practices <p>Form and Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Binary, Ternary, Minuet and Trio, Scherzo, Rondo, Theme and Variations, Sonata form, Strophic, Through-composed

Jazz

Candidates will be examined on the following between the 1920s and 1960s in America:

- Traditional Jazz
- Swing
- Bebop
- Cool Jazz

Knowledge Outcomes	Skills Outcomes	Musical Elements and Concepts
<p>Candidates should be able to demonstrate understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the historical, social and cultural contexts of Jazz • the musical practices of the Jazz tradition • the role of and approaches to improvisation in Jazz • the approaches to arrangement in Jazz (e.g. the roles of instruments and instrumental sections, techniques of instrumentation on textural outcomes) 	<p>Candidates will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distinguish musical characteristics, conventions and features of the select genres, focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Rhythm and Metre – Melody – Harmony and Tonality – Texture – Timbre, Instrumentation and Orchestration (including common instrumental combinations and instrumental performance techniques) – Form and Structure 	<p>Rhythm and Metre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swing rhythm, Backbeat, Syncopation, Groove, Stop time <p>Melody</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue notes • Devices (Repetition, Sequence, Variation, Call-and-response, Fill, Arpeggio, Riff, Vamp) <p>Harmony and Tonality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keys and Modulations • Blues scale • Standard chord progressions (II-V-I, I-VI-II-V), Tonal and Modal cadences • Chords (Dominant 7th, Major 7th, Minor 7th, Added 6th, Diminished, Root position and Inversions, Rootless voicing) • Harmonic rhythm • Chord symbol, Slash chord notation • Devices (Pedal point, Vamp, Turnaround) <p>Texture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polyphony/Contrapuntal, Homophony, Unison, Block chords

Knowledge Outcomes	Skills Outcomes	Musical Elements and Concepts
		<p>Timbre, Instrumentation and Orchestration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key instruments and sections (e.g. rhythm section, horn section, front-line instruments) of the standard Jazz combos and big bands • Role of instruments and instrumental sections • Instrumental techniques (Slide/Glissando/Pitch-bend, Vibrato, Use of mutes) • Performance practices (Walking bass, Comping, Scat, Collective or Solo improvisation, Trading solos, Break, Accent, Articulation, Imitation) <p>Form and Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32-bar AABA form • 32-bar ABAC form • 12-bar blues form • Head, Chorus, Bridge, Interlude

Popular Music

Candidates will be examined on the following from the late 1960s to the present:

- Late 1960s Pop-Rock
- Synth-Pop
- R&B/Soul

Knowledge Outcomes	Skills Outcomes	Musical Elements and Concepts
<p>Candidates should be able to demonstrate understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the historical, social and cultural contexts of popular music • the musical practices of Popular Music • the use and impact of technology in music production, recording and reproduction (e.g. the manipulation of sounds; timbres of electric instruments, computer-generated sounds and acoustic instruments) 	<p>Candidates will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distinguish musical characteristics, conventions and features of the select genres, focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Rhythm and Metre – Melody – Harmony and Tonality – Texture – Timbre and Instrumentation – Vocal and instrumental techniques – Form and Structure – Relationship between lyrics and music – Relationship between the voice(s)/instrument(s)/technology • identify and/or describe conventions of music technology in sound manipulation, production and recording (e.g. over-dubbing, multi-tracking, looping) 	<p>Rhythm and Metre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syncopation, Ostinato, Groove, Riff <p>Melody</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contour, Phrase, Motif, Variation, Riff, Fill, Hook, Lick <p>Harmony and Tonality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scales and Modes, Chords, Tonality, Cadences, Keys and Modulations, Standard chord progressions <p>Texture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homophony, Polyphony, Unison <p>Timbre and Instrumentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acoustic and electric instruments, Synthesised/ Computer-generated sound, Digital effects (FX): Reverb, Distortion, Delay, Panning, Fade in/out • Vocal and instrumental techniques <p>Form and Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verse and Chorus, Intro, Outro, Bridge, Break, Solo, Instrumental interlude, Pop ballad

Asian Music

Candidates will be examined on the following:

- Music of Malay Traditional Dances (*Zapin* and *Joget*)
- Chinese Ensemble Music (*Jiangnan Sizhu* and *Guangdong* Music)
- Indian Ensemble Music (*Carnatic* and *Hindustani*)
- Gamelan (*Javanese*)

Knowledge Outcomes	Skills Outcomes	Musical Elements and Concepts
<p>Candidates should be able to demonstrate understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the social and cultural contexts of music in each tradition • the purpose for which the music is created • approaches to improvisation and arrangement within the context of the various genres/traditions • the roles of instruments (e.g. bass, harmony instruments, rhythm section, percussion) • instrumental/performance techniques unique to the various genres/traditions 	<p>Candidates will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distinguish between the music of the different traditions by examining the musical characteristics of the select genres and traditions, focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Rhythm and Metre – Melody – Texture – Timbre and Instrumentation – Common instruments used (including combination of instruments) – Form and Structure • differentiate between the genres specified in each tradition (where applicable) 	<p>Malay Traditional Dances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruments: <i>gambus</i>, violin, <i>seruling</i>, accordion, <i>rebana</i>, <i>marwas</i> and gong • Typical rhythmic patterns associated with each dance genre • Functions and features of <i>taksim</i> and <i>wainap</i> <p>Chinese Ensemble Music</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruments: <i>erhu</i>, <i>gaohu</i>, <i>guzheng</i>, <i>yangqin</i>, <i>pipa</i>, <i>sanxian</i>, <i>dizi</i>, <i>xiao</i>, <i>sheng</i>, clappers, cymbals and drums • Tempo/Form: <i>manban</i>, <i>zhongban</i>, <i>kuaiban</i> • Mode: Pentatonic <p>Indian Ensemble Music</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruments: <i>sitar</i>, <i>veena</i>, violin, <i>sarod</i>, <i>sarangi</i>, <i>tabla</i>, <i>mridangam</i> and <i>tambura</i> • Improvisation according to <i>raga</i> and <i>tala</i> • Form/Structure: <i>alap/alapana</i>, <i>gat</i>, <i>kriti</i> <p>Gamelan (Javanese)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruments: metallophones, gongs, gong-chimes, <i>rebab</i>, <i>suling</i> and <i>kendang</i> • Tuning systems: <i>pelog</i>, <i>slendro</i> • Texture: polyphonic stratification, heterophony

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

The assessment objectives for this syllabus are presented below.

AO1 Demonstrate Musical Understanding and Knowledge

Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- Musical elements, concepts and knowledge; and
- Musical processes and skills

AO2 Interpret and Communicate Musical Ideas

Students should be able to apply musical knowledge and understanding to:

- Interpret music in a variety of contexts
- Explain how musical knowledge is understood in particular contexts
- Communicate musical ideas and expressions through a variety of modes; and
- Collaborate with others to present effective ensemble performances

AO3 Analyse and Evaluate Music

Students should be able to analyse and evaluate music, using appropriate music terminology, to:

- Analyse music of a wide range of genres, styles and traditions, including unfamiliar works by other composers/performers
- Make judgement about their own musical works and performances based on stylistic understandings and relevant creating and performing conventions
- Reflect and make recommendations and decisions during the creating and performing process

The examination will reward candidates for positive achievement in:

Paper 1: Music Studies

- Identify, explain and/or describe musical concepts, instruments and stylistic characteristics in the context of the genres, traditions and styles
- Distinguish between the music of the different traditions and provide justification by examining the musical characteristics of the select genres and traditions
- Complete short musical dictation and read staff/lead sheet notation in the context of Western Classical, Jazz and Popular Music

Paper 2: Creating

- Demonstrate an understanding of the capabilities of the chosen voice, instrument(s) and/or electronic medium
- Demonstrate inventiveness of their musical idea(s) in communicating the intent of the work for a proposed context
- Demonstrate coherence of musical composition in terms of structure and style
- Demonstrate communication of aural imagination and compositional intentions
- Document and reflect on the compositional process

Paper 3: Performing

- Demonstrate technical competence and interpretative understanding through performing in solo and/or ensemble settings
- Communicate musical understanding and expression with a sense of purpose and audience
- Reflect on possible strategies and musical decisions candidates make during rehearsals to overcome creative and/or technical challenges in solo and/or ensemble settings

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SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT

The following table provides a summary of the weighting and assessment of the examination.

All Music candidates are required to take all the compulsory papers listed in the table below:

Paper	Title	Weighting	Assessment Format	Duration	Marks
1	Music Studies	40%	Written Examination	1 hour 30 minutes	75
2	Creating	30%	(i) Composition	9 weeks, 5 hours of supervision time	40
			(ii) Reflection Notes		10
3	Performing	30%	(i) Recital	5–10 minutes	40
			(ii) Reflection Notes	–	10

DESCRIPTION OF PAPERS AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

PAPER 1	MUSIC STUDIES
Weighting	40%
Assessment Format	Written Examination (1 hour 30 minutes) (75 marks)

Paper 1 has three parts containing six unprepared listening questions, all of which are compulsory:

	Areas of Study	No. of Questions	Marks
Part 1	Western Classical Tradition	2	25
Part 2	Jazz	1	25
	Popular Music	1	
Part 3	Asian Music	2	25

All questions will test candidates' aural perception skills, knowledge and understanding of the range of music stipulated in the syllabus. This will be done through unprepared recorded extracts. The question types include multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions, brief explanations or descriptions, and melody and/or rhythm dictation tasks. A maximum of two questions on melodic and/or rhythmic dictation will be set in Parts 1 and 2. Candidates are expected to use accurate technical vocabulary in all their answers.

Candidates must be able to follow the music extracts with the help of a skeleton score in Question 1, a full or skeleton score in Question 2, a skeleton score or lead sheet in Question 3 and a skeleton score or lead sheet in Question 4. A question on simple melodic and/or rhythmic dictation will be set for either Question 1 or 2. The extracts for Questions 5 and 6 will not be accompanied by any score. The duration of each extract will be between 30 seconds and 1 minute 30 seconds. There will be timed pauses between each playing of the recorded extracts to allow candidates time to write down their answers.

Part 1: Western Classical Tradition (25 marks)

Question 1 will carry 10 marks and Question 2 will carry 15 marks.

Questions 1 and 2 will be set on any of the following Western Classical Tradition genres listed below:

- (i) Solo Instrumental Music
 - (a) Baroque Dance Suite
 - (b) Classical Sonata
 - (c) Romantic Character Piece
 - (d) 20th Century Musical Styles (Impressionism, Nationalism and Minimalism)
- (ii) Chamber Music
 - (a) Classical String Quartet
 - (b) Romantic German Lieder (for solo voice and piano)
- (iii) Symphony (from the Classical and Romantic periods)

Extract 1 will be played four times, accompanied by a skeleton score.

Question 1 will assess knowledge on:

- the identification, explanation and/or description of the following elements and concepts in music:
 - Rhythm, metre and tempo
 - Harmony and tonality
 - Timbre, instrumentation and orchestration
 - Period and style
 - Relationship between (i) words and music, and (ii) voice(s)/instrument(s)
 - Melody
 - Texture
 - Form and structure
 - Genres
- simple melodic and/or rhythmic dictation of a prominent instrumental or vocal part

Extract 2 will be played four times, accompanied by a full or skeleton score.

Question 2 will assess knowledge on:

- the identification, explanation and/or description of the following elements and concepts in music:

– Rhythm, metre and tempo	– Melody
– Harmony and tonality	– Texture
– Timbre, instrumentation and orchestration	– Form and structure
– Period and style	– Genres
– Relationship between (i) words and music, and (ii) voice(s)/instrument(s)	
- detailed observations and higher level aural perception of stylistic and compositional features made in the context of the genre, period, and/or style
- simple melodic and/or rhythmic dictation of a prominent instrumental or vocal part

Part 2: Jazz and Popular Music (25 marks)

Questions 3 and 4 will each carry either 12 or 13 marks.

Question 3 will be set on any of the following Jazz styles from 1920s to 1960s in America listed below:

- (i) Traditional Jazz
- (ii) Swing
- (iii) Bebop
- (iv) Cool Jazz

Extract 3 will be played four times, accompanied by a skeleton score or a lead sheet and lyrics.

Question 3 will assess knowledge on:

- the identification, explanation and/or description of the following elements and concepts in music:

– Rhythm, metre and tempo	– Melody
– Harmony* and tonality	– Texture
– Timbre, instrumentation and orchestration	– Form and structure
– Style	
- simple melodic and/or rhythmic dictation of a prominent instrumental or vocal part
- stylistic and compositional features

**Candidates are not required to aurally identify chords, but should be able to explain and describe different chord types. Candidates are still expected to identify, explain and describe keys and cadences, modulations and harmonic devices.*

Question 4 will be set on any of the following Popular Music genres listed below:

- (i) Late 1960s Pop-rock
- (ii) Synth-Pop
- (iii) R&B and Soul

Extract 4 will be played four times, accompanied by a skeleton score or a lead sheet and lyrics.

Question 4 will assess knowledge on:

- the identification, explanation and/or description of the following elements and concepts in music:

– Rhythm, metre and tempo	– Melody
– Harmony [^] and tonality	– Texture
– Timbre and instrumentation	– Form and structure
– Relationship between (i) lyrics and music, and (ii) voice(s)/instrument(s)/technology [#]	– Genres
- simple melodic and/or rhythmic dictation of a prominent instrumental or vocal part
- stylistic and compositional features

[^]*Candidates are only required to aurally identify common chord progressions. They are also expected to explain and describe different chord types, as well as identify, explain and describe keys and cadences, modulations and harmonic devices.*

[#]*Candidates are required to aurally identify, describe and explain the following digital effects (FX): reverb, distortion, delay, panning and fade in/out. Candidates are also required to describe and explain the following sound manipulation processes and techniques: over-dubbing, multi-tracking and looping.*

Part 3: Asian Music (25 marks)

Questions 5 and 6 will each carry 12 or 13 marks.

Questions 5 and 6 will be set on any of the following Asian Music traditions listed below:

- (i) Music of Traditional Malay Dances (*Zapin* and *Joget*)
- (ii) Chinese Ensemble Music (*Jiangnan Sizhu* and *Guangdong Music*)
- (iii) Indian Ensemble Music (*Hindustani* and *Carnatic*)
- (iv) Gamelan (*Javanese*)

Extracts 5 and 6 will not be accompanied by a score. Each extract will be played four times.

Questions 5 and 6 will assess knowledge on:

- the identification, explanation and/or description of the following elements and concepts in music:

– Rhythm, metre and tempo	– Melody
– Texture	– Timbre and instrumentation
– Form and structure	– Genres
- stylistic and compositional features, and performance practice in the context of the tradition

PAPER 2	CREATING
Weighting:	30%
Assessment Format:	Composition and Reflection Notes (50 marks)

Paper 2 has two parts: Part 1 (Composition) and Part 2 (Reflection Notes).

Part 1: Composition (40 marks)

This part will assess candidates' creative response to a stimulus, and technical competence in composing.

Candidates must submit one composition in response to one of the six stimuli outlined below.

The composition should be a complete piece, written for between one and five instruments (including voice(s)), with a maximum performance duration of 3 minutes.

In addition, candidates must also submit a set of Reflection Notes of 400–500 words, which explicates their decision-making processes during the period of composition to demonstrate their compositional thinking and understanding.

Candidates may use any style, technique or tradition listed in the Areas of Study, or beyond, and compose for any instrument(s) and/or voice(s).

The composition must be notated using staff notation or any other conventional form of notation (e.g. cipher notation, lead sheet) that are appropriate to the style of the music. If an alternative form of notation is used (e.g. graphic score), candidates must ensure that it clearly communicates their compositional intentions. Such scores should be accompanied by performance notes that explain the system of notation. Scores may be either handwritten or computer-generated, but they must be accurately edited.

Candidates who submit a lead sheet or who submit a composition that uses music technology (see options b and d in the table below) must also submit a written commentary.

Score submissions may not be necessary for compositions that use music technology. For compositions that fall into this category (e.g. electroacoustic composition), the audio recording submitted will be assessed in place of a score. Any borrowed materials, sources of pre-set loops, and/or pre-recorded samples must be clearly acknowledged in the Reflection Notes and in the Coursework Submission Form provided by SEAB, and also exported as individual audio files for verification purposes by Cambridge Assessment International Education.¹

The table below illustrates all the possible options for the submission of the Creating component:

	As substantive document [compulsory and assessed]	For illustrative purposes [compulsory but not assessed]
a	Staff notation	Audio recording (WAV format / MP3 format no lower than 320kbps)
b	Lead sheet <u>and</u> written commentary (including staff notation of grooves, etc.)	Audio recording (WAV format / MP3 format no lower than 320kbps)
c	Graphic notation <u>and</u> performance notes	Audio recording (WAV format / MP3 format no lower than 320kbps)
d	Audio recording (WAV format / MP3 format no lower than 320kbps)	Raw audio files and written commentary

¹ The form will be disseminated to schools at the beginning of the year of examination.

Part 2: Reflection Notes (10 marks)

The Reflection Notes should elucidate the candidate's compositional responses to the chosen stimulus using the following guiding questions:

- How did the stimulus lead you to formulate and shape your musical ideas?
- What were one or two technical challenges in developing your ideas? How did you approach these challenges?

Instructions for supervision

Candidates will be allowed up to five hours of supervised time, over a period of up to nine weeks, for the completion of their composition and Reflection Notes. All finished compositions must be recorded. The time required for rehearsing and recording candidates' compositions is not part of the five hours of supervised time, unless the submission is the recording, in which case the recording must be completed within the five hours of supervised time.

Candidates will be allowed access to facilities (piano or keyboard, computer, audio recorder and microphone) during the supervised composition time.

All work drafts must be collected by the coursework supervisor at the end of each session and kept securely until final submission to SEAB.

The stimulus will be issued to candidates in July of the year of the examination and the candidate's composition must be submitted to SEAB by October in the year of the examination.

Composing to a stimulus

Candidates have to write to:

1 MUSICAL STIMULUS

- (i) a set of pitches, OR
- (ii) a given rhythmic motif

OR

2 TEXT STIMULUS

- (i) a poem, OR
- (ii) a set of lyrics

OR

3 CONTEXT STIMULUS

- (i) Context Stimulus 1, OR
- (ii) Context Stimulus 2

Other instructions

Each submission must be accompanied by a statement from the candidate's music teacher endorsed by the Principal of the candidate's school. Teachers will be expected to provide general guidance to the candidates to ensure that the work is completed according to the requirements. This should not in any way raise the standard of the work beyond the candidate's own capability. The teacher's supervision of the progress of the work should enable them to testify that the submission is the unaided work of the candidate and authenticate the score and recording. Unattributed plagiarism can lead to disqualification from the examination.

Coursework must be submitted to SEAB in October (a specific date will be given). Submissions should show the name and number of the centre, the candidate's name and examination number and the details of the examination, i.e. Ordinary Level Music and paper number, i.e. 6085/2. Please note that the centre number used on the submission should match the centre number that was used on the statement of entry.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR CREATING (PAPER 2)

Paper 2 is worth **50** marks in total. The Composition is marked out of 40 and the Reflection Notes out of 10. Candidates will be marked according to the criteria given below:

	Criteria	Marks
1	Creation and structuring of musical ideas in response to the stimulus	10
2	Musical Coherence	10
3	Understanding of the Capabilities of the Chosen Medium	10
4(a)	Communication of Compositional Intentions (Score)	10
4(b)	OR Communication of Compositional Intentions in Technological Format (Recording)	
5	Reflection Notes	10
TOTAL		50

1 Creation and structuring of musical ideas in response to the stimulus

This criterion assesses the creation of musical ideas in response to the chosen stimulus, the suitability of the resulting structure and the appropriateness of the chosen style or tradition.

Descriptor	Mark
Musical ideas are strong and imaginative, with a convincing relationship to the stimulus and the resulting structure of the composition is entirely appropriate; the chosen style or tradition is maintained consistently throughout.	9–10
Musical ideas are well formed, showing a clear response to the stimulus, and the resulting structure of the composition is appropriate; the chosen style or tradition is maintained fairly consistently.	7–8
Musical ideas are adequately formed and derived from the stimulus, and the resulting structure is mainly appropriate; the chosen style or tradition is evident in some passages.	5–6
Musical ideas are loosely formed and the resulting structure is weakly expressed; there is some evidence of an attempt to work within the chosen style or tradition.	3–4
Musical ideas are poorly shaped and little attention is paid to the resulting structure of the composition; the chosen style or tradition is hardly apparent.	1–2
No creditable response to the stimulus.	0

2 Musical Coherence

This criterion assesses the coherence of the composition in terms of the development and linking of musical ideas through the use of compositional techniques and devices (including harmonisation of melodies and the use of appropriate devices).

Descriptor	Mark
The composition is entirely coherent, with highly effective use of devices and techniques to develop and link the musical ideas.	9–10
The composition is mostly coherent, with generally effective use of devices and techniques to develop and link the musical ideas.	7–8
The composition is reasonably coherent, with some effective use of devices and techniques to develop and link the musical ideas.	5–6
The composition shows some musical coherence, but the use of devices and techniques to develop and link the musical ideas is limited.	3–4
The composition shows little musical coherence, and the development and linking of musical ideas is mainly limited to repetition.	1–2
The composition shows no musical coherence, and there is no apparent attempt to develop or link musical ideas.	0

3 Understanding of the Capabilities of the Chosen Medium

This criterion assesses the understanding of technical capabilities (and limitations) of instrumental and/or vocal forces, including technology.

Descriptor	Mark
The work communicates a very secure understanding of the capabilities of the chosen medium.	9–10
The work communicates a secure understanding of the capabilities of the chosen medium.	7–8
The work communicates a moderate understanding of the capabilities of the chosen medium.	5–6
The work shows some understanding of the capabilities of the chosen medium.	3–4
The work shows very limited understanding of the capabilities of the chosen medium.	1–2
The work shows no understanding of the capabilities of the chosen medium.	0

4(i) Communication of Compositional Intentions (Score)

This criterion assesses the suitability of the chosen form of notation, and its consistency to performance detail, in communicating the aural imagination and compositional intentions effectively.

Descriptor	Mark
Accurate, clear and detailed use of appropriate notation and markings that enable the effective communication of the technical and expressive intentions of the composition.	9–10
Mainly accurate, clear and detailed notation and markings that enable the effective communication of most of the technical and expressive intentions of the composition.	7–8
Accurate notation and markings but with some inconsistencies/errors that enable a general communication of the technical and expressive intentions of the composition in most places.	5–6
Partially accurate notation and markings that enable the communication of some of the technical and expressive intentions of the composition.	3–4
Erratic or unclear use of notation and markings that barely enable the composition to be adequately communicated.	1–2
No notation offered and/or no appropriate means of communicating the musical intentions.	0

4(ii) Communication of Compositional Intentions in Technological Format (Recording)

This criterion assesses the control and manipulation of analogue and/or digital sounds in the submitted final mix (recording) in communicating the aural imagination and compositional intentions effectively.

Descriptor	Mark
The final mix is well-balanced, sound quality is excellent, the stereo field is effectively used, and dynamics are carefully controlled. There are no unintentional sonic artefacts and/or distortion, and the communication of the composer's intentions is excellent.	9–10
The final mix is mainly well-balanced, sound quality is good, the stereo field is effectively used, and dynamics are well controlled. Only very occasional and slight unintentional sonic artefacts and/or distortion occur, and the communication of the composer's intentions is mostly effective.	7–8
The final mix is fairly well-balanced, although one or more technical aspects may distort the overall effect. Unintentional sonic artefacts and/or distortion are audible in a number of places, and the communication of the composer's intentions is fairly effective.	5–6
The final mix lacks effective balance, and there are several technical inconsistencies. Unintentional sonic artefacts and/or distortion affect the musical outcome and impede the effective communication of the composer's intentions.	3–4
The final mix is poorly balanced, with many technical inconsistencies that interfere with the musical effect. Communication of the composer's intentions is seriously impaired by poor overall sonic quality.	1–2
The final mix is distorted or erratic.	0

Overall descriptors and mark bands for composition:

Descriptor	Mark
<p>The composition communicates an imaginative response to the stimulus. Musical ideas are strong and well developed through highly effective use of devices and techniques; there is excellent structural and stylistic coherence and a very secure understanding of the chosen medium.</p> <p>Scores (where appropriate) are accurate, well-presented and show attention to detail throughout; recorded sound quality (where appropriate) is excellent, and the final mix is well-balanced.</p>	33–40
<p>The composition communicates a clear response to the stimulus. Musical ideas are well formed and mainly well developed through effective use of devices and techniques; there is secure structural and stylistic coherence and a secure understanding of the chosen medium.</p> <p>Scores (where appropriate) are well-presented overall, and show reasonable attention to detail; recorded sound quality (where appropriate) is very good, and the final mix is mainly well-balanced.</p>	25–32
<p>The composition communicates a general response to the stimulus. Musical ideas are adequately developed through some effective use of devices and techniques; there is reasonable structural and stylistic coherence and a moderate understanding of the chosen medium.</p> <p>Scores (where appropriate) are fairly accurate, with occasional inconsistencies/errors; recorded sound quality (where appropriate) is reasonably good, though with some unintended distortion, and the final mix is fairly well balanced.</p>	17–24
<p>The composition communicates an uneven response to the stimulus. Musical ideas are inconsistently developed through inconsistent use of devices and techniques; there is some structural and stylistic coherence and some understanding of the chosen medium.</p> <p>Scores (where appropriate) are partially accurate, with persistent inconsistencies/errors; recorded sound quality (where appropriate) contains several unintended distortions, and the final mix lacks effective balance.</p>	9–16
<p>The composition communicates a weak response to the stimulus. Musical ideas are loosely formed with little evidence of the use of devices and techniques; there is little structural or stylistic coherence and a limited understanding of the chosen medium.</p> <p>Scores (where appropriate) are unclear, with significant inconsistencies/errors; recorded sound quality (where appropriate) is poor, and the final mix is poorly balanced.</p>	1–8
No creditable work submitted.	0

5 Reflection Notes (400–500 words)

This task enables candidates to demonstrate their ability to articulate how their musical ideas were shaped in relation to the chosen stimulus, how they responded to the creative and technical challenges involved, and how musical decisions about medium, techniques and organisation of materials were taken. Candidates are expected to use appropriate technical vocabulary to communicate their musical ideas and decisions.

Descriptor	Mark
A detailed and convincing explanation of how the musical ideas were formulated, developed, and organised in relation to the chosen stimulus. A detailed and convincing explanation of the relevant creative and technical challenges encountered during the process of composing, as well as the evaluation of attempted solutions. Appropriate and secure use of technical vocabulary.	9–10
A clear explanation of how the musical ideas were formulated, developed, and organised in relation to the chosen stimulus. A clear explanation of the relevant creative and technical challenges encountered during the process of composing, as well as the evaluation of attempted solutions. Mostly appropriate and secure use of technical vocabulary.	7–8
A general explanation, but lacking in detail, of how the musical ideas were formulated, developed, and organised in relation to the chosen stimulus. A general explanation of the relevant creative and technical challenges encountered during the process of composing, and a description of some attempted solutions. Some appropriate technical vocabulary is used.	5–6
A weak explanation of how the musical ideas were formulated, developed, and organised in relation to the chosen stimulus. A partial explanation of the relevant creative and technical challenges encountered during the process of composing, and a brief description of some attempted solutions. Limited use of appropriate vocabulary.	3–4
Explanation of how the musical ideas were formulated, developed, and organised in relation to the chosen stimulus is unclear, with little or no reference to the chosen stimulus. Little attempt to explain the relevant creative and technical challenges encountered during the process of composing, with minimal reference to attempted solutions. Technical vocabulary is used sparingly or inappropriately.	1–2
No work submitted or work does not meet minimum criteria in the band above.	0

PAPER 3	PERFORMING
Weighting	30%
Assessment Format	Recital and Reflection Notes (50 marks)

Paper 3 has two parts: Part 1 (Recital) and Part 2 (Reflection Notes).

Part 1: Recital (5–10 minutes) (40 marks)

Part 1 will assess candidates' technical competence and musical understanding through two performances of their own choice of music from any style or tradition. The total performing time should be between 5 and 10 minutes. Candidates will be required to provide their own accompanist and ensemble where appropriate.

Candidates are required to perform two items, each marked out of 40. They must choose one of the following options:

Option 1

Two contrasting pieces on one solo instrument or voice from any style/tradition.

OR

Option 2

Two contrasting pieces:

One piece or movement on one solo instrument or voice from any style/tradition

and

any one of the following from any style/tradition:

- one piece on a second instrument
- Ensemble (on the first or second instrument)
- Accompaniment (on the first or second instrument)

For the selection of repertoire and instrument combination, please refer to page 30 at the end of the syllabus document.

Candidates should perform music appropriate, in its technical and musical demands, to their stage of development at the time of the examination. They will be given positive credit for the following:

- Technical control or Quality of improvisation (e.g. accuracy in notes and rhythm; choice and control of tempo; ensemble coordination, if applicable)
- Musicality and Sensitivity (e.g. sensitivity to articulation, phrasing and dynamics, understanding of musical style, genre and cultural context of the chosen repertoire; blend and balance with the other members of the ensemble or soloist, if applicable)

Candidates will be examined by two examiners at a live performance.

Part 2: Reflection Notes (10 marks)

Part 2 will assess candidates' musical understanding as well as their reflection on musical decisions in the process of their performance preparation.

Candidates are required to submit Reflection Notes of 400–500 words. The Reflection Notes should convey candidates' performative understanding of the pieces and reflect on their musical and technical preparation. Candidates may consider reflecting on the following items:

- Musical decisions made in terms of stylistic interpretation, and shaping of the music
- Performative issues pertaining to technical demands, challenges and performance practice considerations

Candidates are encouraged to draw on relevant research information and recordings in their reflection.

Other instructions

The Reflection Notes should be written under the supervision of the O-Level Music teacher, who will be required to certify that the Reflection Notes submitted are the work of the individual candidate who claims authorship.

The Reflection Notes must be submitted together with the Performing Programme Form and copies of the score (if applicable) for the recital examination.

A completed form outlining the pieces chosen for Paper 3 must be submitted to SEAB. Schools will be advised of the exact date of submission 1–2 months before the date of examination.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR PERFORMING (PAPER 3)

Paper 3 is worth **50** marks in total. The mark out of 80 for Part 1 is divided by 2 (rounding up any odd number) to give a total out of 40 for Part 1. This is added to the mark out of 10 for Part 2, to give a final total out of 50 for this component.

Candidates will be marked according to the criteria given below:

	Criteria	Piece 1	Piece 2
Part 1: Recital (Solo OR Ensemble OR Accompanying)			
1(a)	Technical control appropriate to the style or genre of the music OR Quality of improvisation	20 marks	20 marks
1(b)	Musicality and Sensitivity	20 marks	20 marks
SUBTOTAL		80 marks divided by 2 = 40 marks	
Part 2: Reflection Notes <i>The mark awarded for the reflection notes will be independent of the mark awarded for the recital.</i>			
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of the creative/technical challenges in music selected for the performance Reflection on the musical decisions made in the process of preparation for the performance, including an understanding of the musical styles or contexts that influence their decisions Use of appropriate technical vocabulary 	10 marks	
TOTAL		50 marks	

1(a) Solo Performance on First or Second Instrument: Technical control appropriate to the style or genre of the music OR Quality of improvisation

Descriptor	Mark
<p>Excellent technical control of the instrument with well-developed skills; performance is accurate in notes and rhythm and completely fluent; appropriate choice of tempo, consistently maintained throughout the performance.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Well-structured and coherent quality of improvisation showing a high level of musical inventiveness.</p>	17–20
<p>Good technical control of the instrument with fairly well-developed skills; mostly accurate in notes and rhythm and mainly secure with some inaccuracies, but not enough to disturb the fluency of the performance; appropriate choice of tempo, maintained through most of the performance.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Mostly well-structured and consistent quality of improvisation showing a good level of musical inventiveness.</p>	13–16
<p>Moderately good technical control with moderately developed skills; moderately accurate in notes and rhythm, but with a number of inaccuracies which disturb the fluency of some parts of the performance; choice of tempo is acceptable but with inconsistencies in some parts of the performance.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Moderately structured and mostly consistent quality of improvisation showing some musical inventiveness.</p>	9–12
<p>Some significant weakness in technical control with less well-developed skills; somewhat accurate in notes and rhythm but hesitant, sometimes serious enough to impair the fluency in many parts of the performance; a less appropriate choice of tempo with fluctuations in many parts of the performance.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Loosely structured and inconsistent quality of improvisation showing little musical inventiveness.</p>	5–8
<p>Very weak technical control with modest skills; little accuracy in notes and rhythm, with persistent hesitancy, showing little fluency throughout most of the performance; an inappropriate choice of tempo, or an acceptable tempo with fluctuations in most parts of the performance.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Poorly structured quality of improvisation showing limited musical inventiveness.</p>	1–4
<p>The work does not meet the criteria in the band above.</p>	0

1(b) Solo Performance on First or Second Instrument: Musicality and Sensitivity

Descriptor	Mark
Performance is highly expressive through sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating a very secure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the chosen repertoire.	17–20
Performance is mostly expressive through the sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating a secure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the chosen repertoire.	13–16
Performance is fairly expressive through the sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating some understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the chosen repertoire.	9–12
Performance shows some expression with uneven control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating little understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the chosen repertoire.	5–8
Performance lacks expressive awareness or intention due to limited control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating an insecure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the music.	1–4
The work does not meet the criteria in the band above.	0

1(a) Ensemble or Accompanying: Technical control and coordination appropriate to the style or genre of the music OR Quality of improvisation

Descriptor	Mark
<p>Excellent technical control and coordination with ensemble/soloist, with well-developed skills. Strong rapport with other performers through careful listening and effective non-verbal cues. Wholly accurate in notes and rhythm and completely fluent. Appropriate choice of tempo, consistently maintained throughout the performance.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Well-structured and coherent quality of improvisation showing a high level of musical inventiveness.</p>	17–20
<p>Good technical control and coordination with ensemble/soloist, with fairly well-developed skills. Good rapport with other performers through careful listening and effective non-verbal cues. Mostly accurate in notes and rhythm and mainly secure with some inaccuracies, but not enough to disturb the basic fluency of the performance. Appropriate choice of tempo, maintained throughout most of the performance.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Mostly well-structured and consistent quality of improvisation showing a good level of musical inventiveness.</p>	13–16
<p>Moderately good technical control and coordination with ensemble/soloist, with moderately developed skills. A moderate level of communication with other performers through some listening and non-verbal cues. Moderately accurate in notes and rhythm, but with a number of inaccuracies which disturb the fluency of some parts of the performance. Choice of tempo is acceptable but with inconsistencies in some parts of the performance.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Moderately structured and mostly consistent quality of improvisation showing some musical inventiveness.</p>	9–12
<p>Some significant weakness in technical control and generally weak coordination with ensemble/soloist, with less well-developed skills. Some communication with other performers through occasional listening. Somewhat accurate in notes and rhythm but hesitant, sometimes serious enough to impair the fluency in many parts of the performance. A less appropriate choice of tempo, or an acceptable tempo with fluctuations in many parts of the performance.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Loosely structured and inconsistent quality of improvisation showing little musical inventiveness.</p>	5–8
<p>Very weak technical control and poor coordination with ensemble/soloist, with modest skills. A weak level of communication with other performers through inattentiveness in listening. Little accuracy in notes and rhythm, with persistent hesitancy, showing little fluency throughout most of the performance. An inappropriate choice of tempo with fluctuations in most parts of the performance.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Poorly structured quality of improvisation showing limited musical inventiveness.</p>	1–4
<p>The work does not meet the criteria in the band above.</p>	0

1(b) Ensemble or Accompanying: Musicality and Sensitivity

Descriptor	Mark
Performance is highly expressive through the sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating a very secure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the chosen repertoire. Excellently blended and balanced with the other members of ensemble or soloist.	17–20
Performance is mostly expressive through the sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating a secure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the chosen repertoire. Effectively blended and balanced with the other members of ensemble or soloist.	13–16
Performance is fairly expressive through the sensitive control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating some understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the chosen repertoire. Moderately well blended and balanced with the other members of ensemble or soloist.	9–12
Performance shows some expression with uneven control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating little understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the chosen repertoire. Sometimes well blended and balanced with the other members of ensemble or soloist.	5–8
Performance lacks expressive awareness or intention due to limited control of articulation, phrasing and dynamics, communicating an insecure understanding of the style, genre and cultural context of the music. Little attempt to blend and balance with the other members of the ensemble or soloist.	1–4
The work does not meet the criteria in the band above.	0

Overall descriptors and mark bands for performance:

Descriptors	Mark
Performances which are consistently excellent in musicianship and control of technique, communicating a very high level of musical understanding of the music in programmes made up of pieces demanding highly developed skills appropriate for this level and consistent with the candidate's technical development.	33–40
Performances which are very good in musicianship and control of technique, communicating a high level of musical understanding of the music in programmes made up of pieces demanding well-developed skills appropriate at this level and mostly consistent with the candidate's technical development.	27–32
Performances which are fairly good in most respects, demonstrating a developing level of musicianship and technique, communicating a good general understanding of the styles represented in an appropriate combination of pieces for this level, but less even in quality than the higher categories or with some limitations of technique or musicianship.	20–26
Performances which are good in some respects, though more limited in musicianship and/or technique, communicating a restricted understanding of the music in programmes which may not be altogether appropriate to the candidate's technical ability at this level.	13–19
Performances in which limitations of technique or musicianship are significant enough to impede the communication of musical understanding in some important respects in pieces which offer only limited opportunities to display technical and musical skills appropriate to this level.	6–12
Performances which display significant weaknesses in musicianship or technique.	1–5
No work submitted or the work does not meet the criteria in the band above.	0

2 Reflection Notes (400–500 words)

Descriptor	Mark
Excellent understanding of the creative and technical challenges of the music. A comprehensive and cogent reflection on a wide range of issues arising from the performance and its preparation. Appropriate technical vocabulary is used securely with evidence of very good research and informed musical decisions.	9–10
Good understanding of the creative and technical challenges of the music. A thorough and articulate reflection on a range of issues arising from the performance and its preparation. Appropriate technical vocabulary is used, mostly securely with evidence of moderately good research and informed musical decisions.	7–8
Moderate understanding of the creative and technical challenges of the music. A fairly accurate reflection on a range of issues arising from the performance and its preparation. Some appropriate technical vocabulary is used with some evidence of good research and informed musical decisions.	5–6
Some understanding of the creative and technical challenges of the music. Some attempt to reflect on certain issues arising from the performance and its preparation, but little evidence of research and informed musical decisions.	3–4
Very little understanding of the creative and technical challenges of the music. Limited attempt to reflect on a few of the issues arising from the performance and its preparation. Technical vocabulary is used sparingly or inappropriately. No evidence of research and informed musical decisions.	1–2
No work submitted or the work does not meet the criteria in the band above.	0

GUIDELINES ON INSTRUMENT AND REPERTOIRE SELECTION

Additional Notes on Performing

For candidates offering Solo Instrument as an option:

The repertoire must be drawn from what is commonly understood as the solo repertoire of the instrument concerned. Candidates may choose to offer a Western or a non-Western instrument. However, in general:

- Pianists play solo piano music.
- Singers or performers on orchestral instruments are allowed to sing/play unaccompanied songs/music if the candidate so chooses. However, they must not play without an accompaniment if the music is intended to be accompanied.
- Performers who choose to sing and accompany themselves will be assessed on both the vocal and instrumental parts simultaneously using the Solo Performance assessment criteria.

For candidates offering Ensemble as an option:

- An ensemble is a performance by a group of instrumentalists (or singers), each of whom performs an individual part (i.e. the part played by the candidate who is being assessed must not be extensively doubled by any other member of the group). The music should allow sufficient interaction between the players to ensure that ensemble skills can be assessed.
- In most circumstances, there should be a minimum of three players in an ensemble, so that a full range of ensemble skills can be demonstrated. However, pianists are permitted to offer piano duets (which should normally be genuine duets, not arrangements).
- For players of orchestral instruments (strings, woodwind or brass) the repertoire presented for examination normally consists of works (sonatas, concertos or some other genres) in which the solo instrument is accompanied on the piano, which plays either a part originally written for the piano, or an arrangement of an orchestral score. Such pieces always count as solo performances for the orchestral instrument, and may not be offered as ensembles.
- For singers, a full choir with several people singing the same part is not permissible; a small group, with one singer per part, would be required. Vocal duets with piano accompaniment need careful thought, even though three performers are involved. Pieces must allow for a sufficient range of genuine ensemble skills to be demonstrated.

For candidates offering Accompaniment as an option:

In most circumstances, when an accompaniment is played on the piano, there would be one accompanist. For practical reasons and manageability concerns about getting a group of players together at the scheduled time of the examination, candidates are advised that the music selected should involve no more than five accompanists.

For candidates offering a Second Instrument as an option:

Candidates are given the choice to present a different instrument from that presented in the first piece. There is no restriction on the different types of instruments that can be featured. Non-Western instruments may also be offered.