

Awards and Certificates in Musical Development

Graded parameters


Grade 1 to 8

from September 2022



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Sounds of Intent

Grade 1/RQF L1

Level 5 – ‘music-makers’

Emerging	
Time signature/ Beat	$\frac{4}{4}$, $\frac{2}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$ Familiar and easy to follow
Tempo/Speed	60-160 bpm Ranges from slow to quite lively
Key	Up to 2 sharps/flats Written in comfortable keys that are easy to play or sing
Rhythms	Simple rhythms Repetitive and straightforward patterns
Melody/Tune	Mostly moving step by step, though some jumps might be included
Duration	1-2.5 mins
Dynamics/Volume	<i>p</i> , <i>mp</i> , <i>mf</i> , <i>f</i> – with occasional <i>crescendo</i> and <i>diminuendo</i> (< >) A small range of loud and quiet, with some gentle changes
Techniques and musical features	Mainly legato (smooth), though staccato (detached) playing might also be included Basic sound quality/range of tonal colour According to instrument/voice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ basic hand position work ▶ simple chords ▶ simple coordination between hands or hands and feet ▶ easy breath management

Sounds of Intent

Grade 3/RQF L1

Level 5 – ‘music-makers’

Achieving	
Time signature	<p>$\frac{4}{4}, \frac{2}{4}, \frac{3}{4}, \frac{2}{4}, \frac{6}{8}, \frac{12}{8}$ – with occasional changes of time signature</p> <p>Uses a wide variety of beat patterns, with occasional changes that candidates learn to recognise and manage confidently</p>
Tempo/Speed	<p>The full range of tempos</p> <p>Simple changes of pace may occur</p>
Key	<p>Up to 4 sharps/flats</p> <p>Written in comfortable keys, though with some challenge</p> <p>Simple key changes may occur</p>
Rhythms	<p>Includes more detailed and challenging rhythms in both the main tune and the accompaniment</p> <p>Patterns change more often</p>
Melody/Tune	<p>A wider range of notes, moving between higher and lower pitches, and with quicker changes between them</p>
Duration	<p>1.5-3.5 mins</p>
Dynamics	<p><i>pp, p, mp, mf, f, ff</i>, <i>crescendo</i> and <i>diminuendo</i> (< >)</p> <p>A full range of quiet and loud sounds, with clear contrasts and gradual changes in volume</p>
Techniques and musical features	<p>Longer notes and sustained phrases may feature</p> <p>Good sound quality</p> <p>Some challenging playing, singing or music creation, which might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Hands/hands and feet/accompaniment and solo part being more independent of each other ▶ Hand position changes/breath management ▶ Using expressive effects such as slides or grace notes, and more use of articulation (smooth and detached playing) ▶ Range of tonal colour and control of vibrato (fast, slight pitch change, used to add colour to a tone) ▶ Use of effects pedals/technical equipment within performances ▶ Manual beat matching ▶ Use of EQ ▶ Performing with awareness of phrasing and structure <p>Ad lib solo breaks, improvised passages and fills may be included</p>

Sounds of Intent

Grade 5/RQF L2

Level 5 – ‘music-makers’

Excelling	
Time signature	All regular time signatures Uses all common beat patterns, and might include occasional changes in time
Tempo	Can include any speed, with changes of pace within the song possible
Key signature	Can be written in any key, and key changes may be included within a song
Rhythms	Features challenging rhythms, including very fast note patterns and regular offbeat playing
Melody/Tune	Tunes may move around more, with frequent jumps occurring. Pitches might be more challenging to place, with chromaticism (notes that are very close together) and a wider variety of patterns occurring
Duration	2.5-4 mins
Dynamics	The full range of volume might be used, with subtle and sudden changes
Techniques and musical features	Some challenging technical aspects should be demonstrated, which might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Hands/hands and feet/accompaniment and solo part working independently of each other ▶ Hand position changes/breath management ▶ Full use of expressive articulation and embellishments ▶ Wide range of tonal colour and control of vibrato ▶ Use of effects/pedals/technical equipment within performances ▶ Looping ▶ Hot Cues ▶ Harmonic mixing <p>Longer improvised passages and more frequent ad libs may be included</p>

Sounds of Intent

Grade 6/RQF L3

Level 6 – ‘advanced music-makers’

Emerging	
Time signature	All regular time signatures, more use of irregular time signatures and time changes
Tempo	The full range of tempos and time changes are possible within the song
Key signature	Any major or minor keys, key changes may be a regular occurrence
Rhythms	All rhythmic values and corresponding rests, including complex syncopation Complex, irregular and varied patterns will feature Rhythmic independence between hands/hands and feet/solo and accompaniment will be present
Melody	Demanding melodies, which may include wide interval leaps, chromaticism, irregularity
Duration	3-4.5 mins
Dynamics	The full range of dynamics may appear, with subtle and sudden changes
Techniques and musical features	Challenging technical command, which might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Independence of hands/hands and feet/accompaniment and solo part ▶ Challenging passagework ▶ Frequent position changes/complex breath management/challenging diction ▶ Riffs, melodies and accompaniment of different textures ▶ A full range of articulation and ornamentation will be included ▶ Range of tonal colour and control of vibrato ▶ Vocal, instrumental and mixing effects ▶ Changes of feel, genre or mood ▶ Spinbacks <p>Longer improvised passages and frequent ad libs may be included</p>

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Grade 7/RQF L3

Level 6 – ‘advanced music-makers’

Achieving	
Time signature	All regular time signatures, more use of irregular time signatures and time changes
Tempo	The full range of tempos and time changes are possible within the song
Key signature	Any major or minor key; key changes may be a regular occurrence
Rhythms	All rhythmic values and corresponding rests, including complex syncopation Complex, irregular and varied patterns will feature Rhythmic independence between hands/hands and feet/solo and accompaniment will be present
Melody	Melodies will present a challenge to agility, intonation and musical sense
Duration	3-4.5 mins
Dynamics	The full range of dynamics may appear, with subtle and sudden changes
Techniques and musical features	Demanding technical command, which might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Independence of hands/hands and feet/accompaniment and solo part ▶ Challenging passagework ▶ Frequent position changes/complex breath management ▶ Riffs, melodies and accompaniment of different textures ▶ A full range of articulation and ornamentation will be included ▶ Range of tonal colour and control of vibrato ▶ A wide range of vocal, instrumental or mixing effects will be required ▶ Scratching/finger drumming techniques Extended improvised passages and frequent ad libs may be included

Sounds of Intent

Grade 8/RQF L3

Level 6 – ‘advanced music-makers’

Excelling	
Time signature	All regular time signatures, irregular time signatures and numerous time changes
Tempo	The full range of tempos and complex time changes within the song
Key signature	Any major or minor key, with key changes
Rhythms	All rhythmic values and corresponding rests, including complex syncopation and polyrhythms
Melody	Melodies will present a challenge to agility, intonation and musical sense
Duration	3.5-5 mins
Dynamics	The full range of dynamics may appear, with subtle and sudden changes
Techniques and musical features	<p>Advanced technical command, features of which might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Independence of hands/hands and feet/accompaniment and solo part ▶ Challenging passagework ▶ Frequent position changes/registration changes/complex breath management ▶ Riffs, melodies and accompaniment of different textures ▶ Advanced articulation and ornamentation will be demonstrated ▶ Range of tonal colour and control of vibrato will be required ▶ A wide range of vocal, instrumental or mixing effects will be required ▶ Use of A cappella in a mix <p>Extended improvised passages and frequent ad libs may be included</p>