

**A LEVEL**

**Examiners' report**

**MUSIC**

**H543**

For first teaching in 2016

**H543/01/02 Summer 2022 series**

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## Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a section was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

### Advance Information for Summer 2022 assessments

To support student revision, advance information was published about the focus of exams for Summer 2022 assessments. Advance information was available for most GCSE, AS and A Level subjects, Core Maths, FSMQ, and Cambridge Nationals Information Technologies. You can find more information on our [website](#).

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## General overview

After the disruption of the previous two years, candidates and centres are to be warmly thanked and congratulated on their preparation and performance in this year's "live" examination series.

Overall, perhaps as a consequence of the reduced demand of Units 1 and 2 in respect of length and nature of choice, the standard was pleasingly very high overall, candidates clearly enjoying the chance to perform again.

Again, perhaps as a result of reduced time, and the many other challenges facing centres, the administration was generally not as successfully accomplished as in 2019, particularly in terms of uploading candidates' work to the repository. While many centres did accomplish this, for quite a few centres there were items missing (e.g., music scores, coversheets or indeed, the video recordings of the performances themselves). In some cases, centres sent in hard copies and memory sticks containing the performances. This necessitated the transfer and uploading of these by OCR which delayed assessment somewhat. Centres are reminded that the work should not be sent in hard copy form but uploaded to the repository instead. Centres are also reminded to check the section of the repository to which work is added. In some cases, performing work was uploaded to the composing area, and vice versa. In terms of the video recordings themselves, it is very helpful if they can be compressed to ease download time.

Most of the submissions were supported by appropriate scores of the chosen repertoire, in whatever "written" form is appropriate for the instrument. However, there were a few instances in which no score was uploaded at all. While it is appreciated that some scores are less accessible than others, it is in the interest of the candidate to have some written documentation of the performance, be it in terms of notation, or a clear description of the underlying harmonic, melodic, structural and interpretative intentions, as these are the bases for assessment.

In terms of the performances themselves, here are some things to bear in mind.

There were a few submissions below grade 6 level, which meant the full range of marks was not available.

There were no under time performances, and indeed, the majority were considerably longer than the specified minimum, which was understandable and acceptable.

Candidates and centres are reminded that the focus repertoire in H543/2 assesses both the candidate's performance on their instrument in respect of knowledge, technical control and interpretation, but also their communication in terms of involvement and projection of the musical message.

The positioning of candidates for recordings is important. It is beneficial for both candidates and examiners to be able to clearly see the candidates perform as well as hear them. When a guitarist is hidden by an array of stands, or a pianist is filmed at an angle which does not show the keyboard and pedals, this reduces the effectiveness for assessment. Performances recorded in a very small venue can be less effective than in larger venues.

It is also clearly of vital importance to identify the candidate for assessment clearly if they are performing in an ensemble, also highlighting which part is being played.

When a backing track is used, it is vital to check the levels with the performer before recording so that neither the backing track nor the soloist is too loud/soft. This does form part of the assessment criteria, section 3.

Candidates who did well generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well generally did the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performed with overall fluency</li> <li>• Displayed secure technical control</li> <li>• Demonstrated a critical understanding of style</li> <li>• Showed personal interpretation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performed with erratic fluency</li> <li>• Displayed inconsistent technical control</li> <li>• Demonstrated limited critical understanding of style</li> <li>• Showed limited personal interpretation</li> </ul>

## Most common causes of centres not passing

While pleasingly, it was not the case this year, the most common cause of candidates not passing would be the lack of overall continuity in a performance, and very limited technical control and/or evidence of understanding of the music being played.

## Common misconceptions

Although less common than it used to be, there is still evidence that candidates think it is advantageous to play music of a higher level than the requisite grade 6 standard. As highlighted above, this is not the case.

## Avoiding potential malpractice

All video recording submissions need to be of the entered candidate, filmed in one take with no spliced retakes.

## Helpful resources

The candidates' instrumental teachers are one of the best resources they have for performing. Adherence to the advice proffered by them will stand candidates in good stead.

## Additional comments

A huge vote of thanks is extended to the accompanists who provide such crucial support for candidates in this area of the qualification.

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