



MTB Marking Criteria

Contemporary Practical Examinations

Grades 1-8

September 2023

MTB MARKING CRITERIA

CONTEMPORARY PRACTICAL EXAMINATIONS

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Award Categories

The examination is marked out of 100 with a pass mark of 60. Award categories are as follows:

87-100	Distinction
75-86	Merit
60-74	Pass
45-59	Blue
0-44	White

Important Notes

1. The guidelines below are structured and colour co-ordinated by our award categories. These give an indication within each section of the exam of the trajectory towards your final result.
2. Terms in the tables should be interpreted appropriately for the level of the examination. Terminology used in the assessment categories and marking tables has a different level of expectation at each grade.
3. A mark of 0 is only awarded if the section is not performed at all.
4. Each category is likely to have several/many constituent elements which are being assessed and examiners establish a mark resulting from the balance of all these elements as well as any others which arise from time to time. The marking outcome is drawn from all relevant elements in a particular examination.
5. If you feel a result is incorrect MTB exams offer an appeals process (appealing an assessment result) the policy for which can be found [here](#). While MTB welcomes feedback we do not discuss individual marks or marksheets outside this process.

Assessment Categories

Accuracy	
Key Areas	Key Elements
Rhythm	Control of pulse. Control of rhythm. Rhythmic character. Fluency. Interpretation of rhythm (when appropriate).
Pitch	Accuracy of notes. Intonation (when appropriate). Maintaining tonality (when appropriate). Maintaining level of pitch (when appropriate). Interpretation of pitch (when appropriate).
Fluency	Sense of fluency regarding notes and rhythm. Sense of musical fluency. The ability to maintain a flowing musical line. Ability to recover quickly from slips or from hesitations due to loss of control or losing place in the music.

Expression	
Key Areas	Key Elements
Phrasing	Expressive. Idiomatic. Musical shaping (without technical issues distorting the line). Well-realised detail. Appropriate rubato.
Dynamics	Due regard given to notated dynamic markings. Appropriate and stylish use of performer's own dynamic inflections.
Articulation	Due regard given to notated articulation markings. Articulation performed in an appropriate style for the piece.
Character	Ability to convey musical character. Ability to contrast musical character.
Stylistic understanding	An informed knowledge of musical stylistic context. The ability to perform with conviction in an appropriate style. The ability to maintain a coherent style within a piece. An understanding of musical form and its impact on performance.
Musicality	Demonstrate an understanding of the music being performed. Avoid 'musical awkwardness' (this might well arise from gaps in technical facility). To let the music flow with a sense of musical logic (i.e. subsequent material is influenced appropriately by that which precedes it). An ability to command the expressive elements in the music. Confidence. An assured performance. An ability to engage the listener in the performance. Vivid communication. Creative ideas of interpretation and the ability to incorporate these.

Technique	
Key Areas	Key Elements
Up to /appropriate tempo	Establish a clear tempo in the light of information and/or stylistic considerations. Maintain tempo or allow it to fluctuate for musical reasons rather than technical ones.
Control	Show an ability to control technical elements in order to present musical ideas with conviction. Avoid a lack of technical facility undermining musical intentions.
Tone quality	Projection. To have secure control over tone quality. To maintain consistency of tone quality. To be aware of tone quality whilst playing and vary it appropriately. Ability to establish, maintain and contrast a wide range of tone colours. Have the technical ability to use a palette of tone colours imaginatively.
Technical elements which are specific to each discipline (instrument)	See Appendix 1 (P8) for the technical elements which are specific to each discipline (instrument).

RECITAL SECTION (75 marks)

Categories being assessed: accuracy, expression and technique.

Pieces	Accuracy (9 marks)	Expression (8 marks)	Technique (8 marks)
Distinction [22-25 per piece]	Completely/almost completely accurate, only inconsequential faults or errors across elements which do not affect the overall performance.	Excellent expression, any missing elements do not affect the success of the overall performance.	Excellent technique, only inconsequential technical deficiencies across elements which do not affect the overall performance.
Merit [19-21 per piece]	Predominantly accurate, minor faults or errors across elements which have only a limited effect on the overall performance.	Good expression, some missing elements which have a limited effect on the success of the overall performance.	Good technique, minor technical deficiencies across elements which have a limited effect on the overall performance.
Pass [15-18 per piece]	Reasonably accurate, several faults or errors across elements which affect the overall performance.	Reasonably expressive, several missing elements which affect the success of the overall performance.	Reasonable technique, several technical deficiencies across elements which affect the overall performance.
Blue [12-14 per piece]	Significant inaccuracies, many faults or errors across elements which significantly affect the overall performance.	Lacking expressive elements which significantly affect the success of the overall performance.	Insecure technique, significant technical deficiencies across elements which significantly affect the overall performance.
White [0-11 per piece]	Fundamental inaccuracies with numerous serious faults or errors across elements which substantially undermine the overall performance.	Little or no attention to expression, significant missing elements which substantially affect the success of the overall performance.	Serious technical insecurity, serious deficiencies across elements which substantially undermine the overall performance.

TECHNICAL SECTION (25 marks)

Categories being assessed: Relevant elements of accuracy, technique, expression (phrasing, dynamics, articulation as appropriate). Technical Exercises are marked as a whole, not individually. The descriptors below apply to the impression of the exercises overall.

Technical Exercises	Marked out of 25
Distinction [22-25]	Completely/almost completely accurate. Only inconsequential faults or errors across elements. All, or nearly all fluent and at the correct tempo. Excellent technique & relevant elements of expression.
Merit [19-21]	Predominantly accurate. Only minor faults or errors across elements. Predominantly fluent and nearly at the correct tempo. Good technique & relevant elements of expression.
Pass [15-18]	Reasonably accurate. Several faults or errors across elements. Reasonably fluent and somewhat under tempo. Reasonable technique & relevant elements of expression.
Blue [12-14]	Significant inaccuracies. Significant faults or errors across elements. Lacking fluency and significantly under tempo. Insecure technique & lacking relevant elements of expression.
White [0-11]	Fundamental inaccuracies. Many significant faults or errors across elements. Very hesitant and slow. Serious technical insecurity & little or no relevant elements of expression.

Appendix: Instrument Specific Technique

The below provides an example of instrument specific technical elements, this list is not exhaustive and technical aspects relevant to the repertoire will also be considered within the technical assessment criteria.

Contemporary Guitar

Clarity of note production, shifts, plucking techniques, vibrato, chords, intonation, technical facility, technical aspects relevant to the repertoire.

Contemporary Drums

Balance between hands and feet, foot work, co-ordination, correct use of instrument (such as bell of ride, rim-click, trashy hi-hat etc.), technical facility, technical aspects relevant to the repertoire.

Contemporary Singing

Smooth movement between head/chest/different registers, breath control and support, vibrato, diction, intonation, technical facility, range, quality of sound at extremes of registers, technical aspects relevant to the repertoire.

Contemporary Bass Guitar

Clarity of note production, position shifts, plucking techniques, stylistic awareness, chords, intonation, technical facility, technical aspects relevant to the repertoire.