

Music Technology

2013 Chief Assessor's Report



Government
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MUSIC TECHNOLOGY

2013 CHIEF ASSESSOR'S REPORT

OVERVIEW

Chief Assessors' reports give 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, the quality of student performance, and any relevant statistical information.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Eighty-six students from twenty-six schools completed Music Technology in 2013. Students submitted recordings in a wide range of musical styles, including rock band, electronic, dance, hip hop, soundscapes, radio advertisements, and vocal recordings. There was a balance between recordings of original songs or compositions and recordings of arrangements of covers. Commentaries were mostly in essay form although several were submitted as filmed presentations and in multimedia formats.

The most successful students demonstrated a high degree of creativity and musical effectiveness, and approached their recordings from the perspective of a music producer and audio engineer rather than an audio engineer. An A– or above was received by 22% of the students, and more than 65% received a B– or above. No Merit Certificates were awarded.

SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

Assessment Type 1: Folio of Minor Projects

Approximately two-thirds of the students recorded their five minor projects in the combination option. The remaining students chose the single recording option, divided approximately evenly between digital recording, MIDI sequencing, and loops and waves.

The most successful students demonstrated creative development, textural contrast, and appropriate and varied use of the nominated recording process. Task designs that created an authentic purpose for these five minor projects supported students to construct more complex music therefore giving them the opportunity to demonstrate learning at the highest level. Successful students created advertising jingles, movie soundtracks, and song excerpts featuring drum, guitar, and vocal solos that emphasised the nominated production techniques within the required 30-second duration.

Teachers are advised to assess all tasks directly against the performance standards. In scaffolding the learning, teachers should also carefully check the nominated processes for assessing students' minor projects. Students should only use

appropriate processes and avoid combining audio loops, digital recording, and MIDI into a single 30-second project. The diversity of software tools available to students will continue to cloud the distinction between MIDI and software/hardware synthesis. Teachers are to ensure that minor projects continue to focus on developing technical process skills for a specific recording option.

Assessment Type 2: Commentary

Most commentaries were submitted in essay form. The successful commentaries clearly stated the nominated recording process, and explained the function of the process. Students annotated diagrams or screen shots, explained the recording process, used musical and technical terminology appropriately, and described the changes made to the final sound. They were also selective in their discussions, focusing on their nominated processes and keeping within the limit of 1200 words.

Supporting audio data CDs containing wave-and-loop data should be referred to as evidence in the commentary. Students should avoid including audio tracks and screen shots that contain clipped recording signals, as well as inappropriate use of devices and terminology.

Teachers are encouraged to help the moderation process by including annotated performance standards rubrics or other assessment notes with moderation materials.

Teachers and students are advised that there are changes to the description of Assessment Type 1 and 2 in the 2014 subject outline.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Assessment Type 4: Major Project

This assessment type gives students the opportunity to explore musical styles that they find motivating and engaging. It was pleasing that many students demonstrated an understanding of appropriate production and engineering techniques for the musical style of their recording. There was an even distribution of the three recording options; however, no analogue recordings were submitted.

The successful students followed a task design that demonstrated the technical skills to record a performance accurately and then continued to improve the recording through music production and processing.

These improvements included:

- overdubbing instruments
- rearranging and editing the recording
- a discerning and appropriate use of EQ and FX processing
- giving consideration to textural and musical variety and development, as well as to post-production mastering.

The most successful students also matched the minor project recording options and processes closely to the skills and techniques required to complete their major project successfully.

Successful commentaries:

- included discussion of aspects of pre-production and trial recordings
- provided track sheets with explanations of production decisions and processing
- demonstrated appropriate application and understanding of relevant core and option topics
- included discussion of recording influences and focused on an effective and appropriate musical outcome.

Teachers are advised to refer to the subject operational information on the Music Technology minisite, for the nominated specific features against which this assessment type is assessed, and to formulate their task design to maximise the opportunity for students to address the specific features at the highest level.

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