

Units 1 / 4 – Performing

1. What standard is expected for GCE Performing?

For AS: Standard Level (SL) = Grade 5
 More Difficult (MD) = Grade 6+
 Easier than Standard Level (ESL) = Grade 4 or below

For A-Level: Standard Level (SL) = Grade 6
 More Difficult (MD) = Grade 7+
 Easier than Standard Level (ESL) = Grade 5 or below

If the piece is on a graded exam syllabus, we accept it at that difficulty level. If you are unsure about the level of difficulty, please email music@wjec.co.uk.

2. How many pieces are required? Is there a penalty for playing fewer pieces?

For AS – minimum of 2 pieces, lasting 6-8 minutes.

For A Level Option A – minimum of 3 pieces, lasting 10-12 minutes.

For A level Option B – minimum of 2 pieces, lasting 6-8 minutes.

If candidates perform fewer than the required number of pieces, they will be awarded zero for each missing piece, as would happen if they left out a question on an exam paper.

3. Are there any penalties applied in performance?

If a performance is below the minimum time requirement, a timing penalty will be applied – please refer to Appendix A of the specification for details. There is no penalty for exceeding the maximum time requirement.

4. How is the timing calculated?

The time starts when the candidate sings or plays their first note and ends at the end of their final note. Any long introductions, outros, or significant sections when the candidate is not performing will not be included in the final total.

5. What needs to be provided for the visiting examiner?

- A prepared marksheet for each candidate.
The form can be downloaded from the website. The teacher should fill in the centre number, candidate number, title, composer, and level of difficulty of each piece. The examiner will complete the assessment sections and the timing.
- A score or a lead sheet for every piece – the assessed part is all that is required. If there is no score available, a lead sheet, or tab containing rhythm, pitch and performance directions is acceptable.
- A running order for the day.

6. A candidate wishes to perform without the accompaniment. Is this allowed?

Yes, it would be permitted, but it is recommended that the accompaniment is used. This can be live or in the form of a backing track.

7. Can a candidate improvise in their performance?

Yes, a candidate may improvise during their performance, but must provide a copy of the stimulus (e.g. a chord sequence, scale etc.) and a lead sheet detailing the plan for the performance, including performance directions as appropriate.

In this case, the accuracy aspect of the assessment is considered in terms of how successfully the improvisation fits with any other performers or backing, whether it is stylistically appropriate etc. and the level of difficulty is judged on the outcome.

8. Can a candidate perform using technology?

The current specification does not offer an option for pre-recorded or sequenced performance, only live performance can be credited, but this could include the use of technology. Please email specific questions to music@wjec.co.uk.

9. Can a candidate perform on more than one instrument?

Yes, but there is no “second study” advantage as there was many years ago.