

# Selecting repertoire for GCSE Music performance.

**The standard level of difficulty for GCSE is Grade 3. Candidates must perform 1 true ensemble (see the flow chart on the website for details) lasting at least 1 minute, and at least one other piece to give a total performance time of at least 4 minutes.**

There is no requirement to play or sing a **solo**, but most candidates do.

When selecting **solo repertoire**, the easiest way to be sure that you know the grade standard, is to select a piece from one of the graded exam syllabuses. There are several accredited boards, for example ABRSM, RSL, Trinity. There are also specialist boards for music from different cultures.

If a piece of music has been set at a particular grade on an accredited exam board syllabus, then we **will** accept it as being at that grade. It must be the **same edition/arrangement listed** in the syllabus.

We do not *automatically* accept the level of difficulty of pieces performed in a graded exam if it is an additional piece of the candidate's free choice (eg an unaccompanied folk song in a vocal exam) or if there is no specified edition or arrangement given.

You can check if an exam board is accredited by looking at the DFE list on this page

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-4-qualifications-discount-codes-and-point-scores>

For **ensemble** performance there are some accredited grades which include the same piece for several instruments (eg RSL pieces for guitar, bass and drums at grades 3, 5 and 8 on the pre-2016 lists.)

If your candidate wishes to play pieces which are not on any graded specification, then you will need to judge the level of difficulty. In order to help you do that there is a set of criteria for each family of instruments which can be found in Appendix A of the GCSE specification (available to download from the website.)

We want you to feel confident in making these judgements. If you are not sure, please scan a copy of the sheet music and email it to [music@wjec.co.uk](mailto:music@wjec.co.uk) along with your opinion of the level of difficulty and a brief explanation of why you have made this judgement. Please do not send audio files or links to YouTube. These queries are forwarded to the principal moderator, who will respond to clarify if the piece is:

LD – less difficult than standard

SL – standard level

MD – more difficult than standard

We receive a large volume of these queries, often including pieces from grade syllabuses, or pieces which are *obviously* above or below standard. If you are confident in your judgement you do not need to have it checked.

It is important to remember that every performance must be accompanied by sheet music, or a detailed lead sheet. Tab notation is acceptable, but it must include the rhythm, any strum patterns and performance directions such as tempo and dynamic markings.

If you wish to adapt a piece of music, please mark this clearly on the score before the performance. You are not permitted to edit candidate recordings. Remember that cutting sections can alter the level of difficulty. Additional repeats can be added if they are musically sensible.