



MUSIC  
TEACHERS'  
BOARD

# MTB Marking Criteria

MTB Teaching Qualifications & Diplomas

**Instrumental Levels 2, 3, 4 and 6**

May 2026

# MTB MARKING CRITERIA TEACHING QUALIFICATIONS & DIPLOMAS

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## Award Categories

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

<b>80-100</b>	<b>Distinction</b>
<b>60-79</b>	<b>Pass</b>
<b>40-59</b>	<b>Below Pass</b>
<b>0-39</b>	<b>Unclassified</b>

## Important notes about these guidelines

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. A mark of 0 is only awarded if the section is not presented at all.
3. Terms in the tables should be interpreted appropriately for the level of the examination. Where we reference appropriate level:
  - Level 2: Awareness of the Elements
  - Level 3: An understanding of the Elements
  - Level 4: A detailed understating of the Elements
  - Level 6: A comprehensive understanding of the Elements
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.

## Module 1 – Performance Assessment Categories

### Management of Target Durations:

- Level 2: 5-8 minutes
- Level 3: 7-10 minutes
- Level 4: 9-14 minutes
- Level 6: 10-15 minutes

### Penalties:

Performances outside of the required durations may have marks deducted in all sections of the Performance.

<b>Accuracy</b>	
<b>Key Areas</b>	<b>Key Elements</b>
<b>Rhythm</b>	Control of pulse. Control of rhythm. Rhythmic character. Interpretation of rhythm (when appropriate).
<b>Pitch</b>	Accuracy of notes. Intonation (when appropriate). Maintaining tonality (when appropriate). Maintaining level of pitch (when appropriate). Interpretation of pitch (when appropriate).
<b>Fluency</b>	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.

<b>Expression</b>	
<b>Key Areas</b>	<b>Key Elements</b>
<b>Phrasing</b>	Expressive. Idiomatic. Musical shaping (without technical issues distorting the line). Well-realised detail. Appropriate rubato.
<b>Dynamics</b>	Due regard given to notated dynamic markings. Appropriate and stylish use of performer's own dynamic inflections.
<b>Articulation</b>	Due regard given to notated articulation markings. Articulation performed in an appropriate style for the piece.
<b>Character</b>	Ability to convey musical character. Ability to contrast musical character.
<b>Stylistic understanding</b>	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.
<b>Musicality</b>	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.
<b>Level of content</b>	Appropriate complexity, range and substance of expressive demands for the grade.

<b>Technique</b>	
<b>Key Areas</b>	<b>Key Elements</b>
<b>Up to /appropriate tempo</b>	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.
<b>Control</b>	Show an ability to control technical elements in order to present musical ideas with conviction. Avoid a lack of technical facility undermining musical intentions.
<b>Tone quality</b>	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.
<b>Posture</b>	Correct standing/sitting position for playing the instrument. Avoiding undue tensions on the body. Fingering, arm movement where appropriate.
<b>Level of content</b>	Appropriate complexity, range and substance of technical demands for the grade.
<b>Technical elements which are specific to each discipline (instrument)</b>	See Appendix 1 (P11) for the technical elements which are specific to each discipline (instrument).

## Module 1 – Performance (40 marks)

**Categories being assessed:** Accuracy, Expression and Technique.

Marking guidelines below suggest the approximate grade boundaries relating to each category.

	Accuracy (14 marks)	Expression (13 marks)	Technique (13 marks)
Distinction [32-40]	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.
Pass [24-31]	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.
Below Pass [16-23]	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.
Unclassified [0-15]	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.

## Modules 2 to 4 – Assessment Categories

<b>Knowledge</b>	
<b>Key Areas</b>	<b>Key Elements</b>
<b>Understanding</b>	Area specific knowledge. Understanding of relevant terminology. Appropriate level of understanding/knowledge. Accuracy of response (where relevant).
<b>Informed responses</b>	Relevant response. Focused response. Appropriate level of detail.
<b>Breadth of knowledge</b>	Use of extra music references. Wide knowledge of specialisation/instrument. Knowledge of related areas. Knowledge of performance traditions/stylistic considerations.

<b>Communication</b>	
<b>Key Areas</b>	<b>Key Elements</b>
<b>Ability to communicate effectively/appropriately</b>	Engagement. Clarity: articulation, animate. Appropriateness: inclusive, adaptive. Assurance. Appropriate use of terminology. Imagination.
<b>Demonstrate effectively/appropriately</b>	Clear. Relevant. Appropriate. Delivery.
<b>Time management</b>	Pace of communication. Completeness of answers.

## Module 2 – Teaching Your Instrument (30 marks)

**Categories being assessed:** Knowledge and Communication.

Marking guidelines below suggest the approximate grade boundaries relating to each category.

	<b>Knowledge (15 marks)</b>	<b>Communication (15 marks)</b>
<b>Distinction [24-30]</b>	Excellent knowledge (breadth of knowledge, understanding and informed responses).	Excellent communication (ability to communicate effectively, demonstrate effectively, appropriate time management).
<b>Pass [18-23]</b>	Good knowledge (breadth of knowledge, understanding and informed responses).	Good communication (ability to communicate effectively, demonstrate effectively, appropriate time management).
<b>Below Pass [12-17]</b>	Limited knowledge (breadth of knowledge, understanding and informed responses).	Limited communication (ability to communicate effectively, demonstrate effectively, appropriate time management).
<b>Unclassified [0-11]</b>	Little or no knowledge (breadth of knowledge, understanding and informed responses).	Little or no communication (ability to communicate effectively, demonstrate effectively, appropriate time management).

## Module 3 – Principles Of Teaching (20 marks)

**Categories being assessed:** Knowledge and Communication.

Marking guidelines below suggest the approximate grade boundaries relating to each category.

	<b>Knowledge (10 marks)</b>	<b>Communication (10 marks)</b>
<b>Distinction</b> [16-20]	Excellent knowledge (breadth of knowledge, understanding and informed responses).	Excellent communication (ability to communicate effectively, demonstrate effectively, appropriate time management).
<b>Pass</b> [12-15]	Good knowledge (breadth of knowledge, understanding and informed responses).	Good communication (ability to communicate effectively, demonstrate effectively, appropriate time management).
<b>Below Pass</b> [8-11]	Limited knowledge (breadth of knowledge, understanding and informed responses).	Limited communication (ability to communicate effectively, demonstrate effectively, appropriate time management).
<b>Unclassified</b> [0-7]	Little or no knowledge (breadth of knowledge, understanding and informed responses).	Little or no communication (ability to communicate effectively, demonstrate effectively, appropriate time management).

## Module 4 – Supplementary Units (10 marks)

**Categories being assessed:** Knowledge and Communication.

Marking guidelines below suggest the approximate grade boundaries relating to each category.

	<b>Knowledge (5 marks)</b>	<b>Communication (5 marks)</b>
<b>Distinction</b> [8-10]	Excellent knowledge (breadth of knowledge, understanding and informed responses).	Excellent communication (ability to communicate effectively, demonstrate effectively, appropriate time management).
<b>Pass</b> [6-7]	Good knowledge (breadth of knowledge, understanding and informed responses).	Good communication (ability to communicate effectively, demonstrate effectively, appropriate time management).
<b>Below Pass</b> [4-5]	Limited knowledge (breadth of knowledge, understanding and informed responses).	Limited communication (ability to communicate effectively, demonstrate effectively, appropriate time management).
<b>Unclassified</b> [0-3]	Little or no knowledge (breadth of knowledge, understanding and informed responses).	Little or no communication (ability to communicate effectively, demonstrate effectively, appropriate time management).

## 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.

<p><b>Classical Guitar</b> Clarity of note production, shifts, plucking techniques (tirando and apoyando), vibrato, chords, intonation, technical facility, technical aspects relevant to the repertoire.</p>
<p><b>Piano</b> Touch, balance between hands, pedalling, passagework, technical aspects relevant to the repertoire.</p>
<p><b>Singing</b> Smooth movement between head/chest/different registers, breath control &amp; support, vibrato, diction, intonation, technical facility, range, quality of sound at extremes of registers, technical aspects relevant to the repertoire.</p>
<p><b>Strings</b> Bowing techniques, pizzicato, shifts, string crossing, intonation, double stopping, vibrato, technical facility, technical aspects relevant to the repertoire.</p>
<p><b>Woodwind &amp; Brass</b> Breath control, quality of articulation, intonation, pitching, stamina, range, quality of sound at extremes of registers, technical facility, technical aspects relevant to the repertoire.</p>
<p><b>Drums</b> Balance between hands and feet, foot work, rolls, 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.</p>
<p><b>Keyboard</b> Voicing, chords, use of available effects, pedalling (if relevant), passagework, technical aspects relevant to the repertoire.</p>
<p><b>Contemporary Guitar</b> Clarity of note production, shifts, plucking techniques, vibrato, chords, intonation, technical facility, technical aspects relevant to the repertoire.</p>
<p><b>Contemporary Drums</b> 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.</p>
<p><b>Contemporary Singing</b> Smooth movement between head/chest/different registers, breath control &amp; support, vibrato, diction, intonation, technical facility, range, quality of sound at extremes of registers, technical aspects relevant to the repertoire.</p>