

MARKING GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS

The following breakdown of marks is intended to offer the teacher/student clarity as to how each area of the examination is assessed. These are general guidelines; they do not address details (for example, intonation, pedalling, breath support) that are specific to individual instruments. Inevitably, it is not an exact science, and consequently examiner marking is always subject to some variation. Nevertheless, the examiner comments should offer a clear indication as to why any given mark has been awarded. For Grades VI–VIII and Senior Certificate a higher standard of musical understanding and technical facility is expected.

Pieces

Distinction

19–20: A confident performer; technically assured with effective sense of style and rhythmic character. Showing real performance flair, with excellent communication of character. Expressive and musical playing.

18: Very well prepared and polished playing. A fluent tempo and good attention to detail. A good understanding of the style and character, demonstrating an appropriate dynamic range where appropriate. Rhythmic and confident in delivery.

Honours

17: A generally accurate performance, played at a suitable tempo with good rhythmic shape. Some awareness of style, and dynamic content is present. Good awareness of balance between melody and accompaniment.

16: A suitable tempo and largely accurate performance. Minor slips do not detract from an overall steady pace. Dynamic contrast and sense of style can be further explored; articulation / phrasing is suitable to the style.

Merit

15: Notes and rhythm are generally secure, though the overall tempo may be cautious / may have a tendency to fluctuate. Needing greater awareness of style, with musical detail not yet realised.

14: Errors of notes and rhythm in a number of places, which affects overall fluency. There is evidence of preparation, though delivery is not yet fully secure, and the finer detail of stylistic and musical content has yet to be considered.

Pass

12–13: Continuity problems as a result of note / rhythm insecurity. A steady tempo has not been secured, and musical detail is lacking.

Unsuccessful

10–11: Several inaccuracies of notes / rhythm resulting in little sense of continuity. Inadequate preparation.

9 and lower:

A fractured performance offering little accuracy. Not yet ready for exam presentation.

Scales

15: Quick response; virtuosic and very musical.

14: Confidently executed, fluent tempo and even tone.

13: Well prepared, steady pace.

12: Generally prepared; mostly tidy and even.

11: Fairly competent, though not always secure in execution.

10: These are quite well known, with some errors in delivery; a cautious tempo.

9: An effort has been made, but there are problems of continuity and response.

8 and lower: Inadequate preparation; frequent errors with no real grasp evident.

Sight-Reading

10: A musical performance.

9: Very good attempt, largely accurate and fluent.

8: Occasional weaknesses in fluency and / or accuracy but a good effort overall.

7: A little unsettled in delivery, though a fairly good attempt on the whole.

6: Some effort, but problems of understanding and continuity.

5: Serious problems of understanding and continuity.

4: No real grasp.



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Download a copy of the Standardisation of Marking Guidelines here

GUIDELINES FOR EXAM APPEAL / FEEDBACK

We are fully aware that there will be times when it is necessary to contact us in relation to a recent exam experience, or to appeal an exam result. If you wish to do so, two separate procedures are available; the following guidelines explain each of these procedures.

General Complaints / Feedback: If you wish to draw our attention to circumstances surrounding the day of the exam, it is important that we receive this information as soon as possible and no later than seven days after the exam has taken place. We take this feedback very seriously; it is logged, acknowledged in writing, and fully investigated in the interests of improving our service moving forward. There is no cost involved in this course of action.

Formal Appeal: There will be a fee of €10 for each candidate; if the appeal is upheld, the fee will be reimbursed. In this case, the Senior Examiner will carry out a thorough investigation in relation to your concerns. Appeals must be submitted within twenty-one days of receipt of the results through completion of the form below (scanned copies of the documentation may be attached to email submission). Appeals concern dissatisfaction with the marks / remarks awarded. This investigation will include:

- a statistical analysis of the candidate's previous results
- a statistical analysis of the examiner's work
- an analysis of any similar concerns received about the examiner in question
- consideration by the Senior Examiner of the details given on the appeal form

In order to provide us with the information we need, please fill out all sections of the form and return it to us with copies of the relevant result sheet(s).

Appeal Fee: A charge of €10 per candidate is required at the time of appeal. This money will be refunded, should the original result be overturned. Applicants can pay by cheque, postal order or online at URL:

<https://www.riam.ie/payment/>

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