

Music: Interpreting the EE assessment criteria

Criterion A: Focus and method

(Strands: Topic, Research question, Methodology)

To successfully meet this criterion, students will choose a topic that focuses on analysis, investigation, discussion and evaluation of actual music, that is, musical source material.

While students may be inspired by their musical encounters and experiences, it is important that the chosen topic is relevant and with a distinct research purpose.

The topic is expressed through a clearly stated research question, which is focused and specific without being unduly restrictive to the development of the research study.

The essay must outline the methodology that is followed throughout the research. It should include:

- musical analysis of performances, scores or transcriptions
- collecting and evaluating data, for example through comparative analysis of:
 - interpretations
 - interviews or
 - questionnaires.

The data collection, analysis and evaluation will lead to critical arguments that reflect the student's deeper insight into the material studied.

Students must refer to secondary sources to place the study into a wider context.

Students also need to demonstrate that:

- their essay and research has been well planned
- the methodology used or the approach to the topic is appropriate to the research question.

Criterion B: Knowledge and understanding

(Strands: Context, Subject-specific terminology and concepts)

To successfully meet this criterion, students are expected to demonstrate their prior knowledge of the material studied and how the research is developed in relation to existing insights. Thus, the essay must demonstrate an effective and critical understanding of the topic chosen.

Students should show that they have consulted secondary sources and, throughout the investigation, draw on that existing knowledge to:

- support their research
- enrich the argument and findings.

Thus, sufficient musical preparation and understanding are prerequisites for effective research in music, as is fluency in the use of appropriate subject-specific terminology and reference to or application of musical concepts.

Another important aspect of all research and investigation is the reliability and validity of the study. This refers to choice and use of sources, the musical analysis as well as the evaluation of the collected data within the relevant musical context.

The information and evidence presented needs to be critically evaluated. Students must demonstrate critical awareness of the quality, balance and quantity of their sources. They are also expected to show awareness of any limitations or uncertainties inherent in their approach.

Subjective accounts are not appropriate.

Students should demonstrate fluency in the use of appropriate subject specific terminology and reference to or application of musical concepts.

Criterion C: Critical thinking

(Strands: Research, Analysis and Discussion and evaluation)

Students must be able to interrogate the musical and critical sources selected in order to construct and support a reasoned argument that culminates in a conclusion and answers the research question.

Students should aim to develop their own argument rather than simply adopting the views of critics. EEs that mainly provide viewpoints derived from secondary sources, or that are wholly or largely narrative or descriptive of the material, do not provide evidence of analytical skills and do not score well.

The points contained in the argument and analysis must, at all times, be supported by specific, relevant material chosen from the student's research.

Special efforts should be made to maintain a reasoned, logical argument focused on the research question throughout.

An assessment of the extent to which the research question is answered by the information accessed should form part of the argument.

The conclusion ought to summarize the student's response to the research question and must be consistent with the position and evidence presented in the essay. It should not introduce material that has not already been discussed. Questions that have arisen as a result of the research, and that are considered relevant, may be included.

Criterion D: Presentation

(Strands: Structure, Layout)

This criterion relates to the extent to which the essay conforms to accepted academic standards in relation to how research papers should be presented. It also relates to how well these elements support the reading, understanding and evaluation of the essay.

Students may provide a section and subsection structure to their essays, with appropriate informative headings.

Use of charts, images and tables

Any charts, images or tables from literature sources included in the essay must be carefully selected and labelled. They should only be used if they are directly relevant to the research question, contribute towards the understanding of the argument and are of a good graphic quality. Only selected materials (photographs, images, figures, notation scores) that are central to the argument of the essay should be included in the body of the essay, as close as possible to their first reference.

Special attention is necessary when including score excerpts so that the information needed to read them appropriately is presented, including name of the work, composer, source information, location of the excerpt within the score, recording or performance, clefs, key signatures, tempo, etc. When size permits, it is recommended that the excerpts appear in the body of the essay, in close proximity to the text they illustrate.

Sometimes, the inclusion of a separate annotated score, to be consulted with the reading of the EE, may be the most effective option. This may be included in the appendix of the EE, but students must be aware that any information with

direct relevance to the analysis, discussion and evaluation of the EE must be contained in the body of the essay. Examiners are not required to read information in an appendix.

Any material that is not original must be carefully acknowledged, with specific attention paid to the acknowledgment and referencing of quotes and ideas. This acknowledgment and referencing is applicable to audiovisual material, text, graphs and data published in print and electronic sources. For music, students must also reference transcripts of music and live performances as well as include time within a recording or track and bar numbers within a score. If the referencing does not meet the minimum standard as indicated in the guide (name of author, date of publication, title of source and page numbers as applicable), and is not consistently applied, work will be considered as a case of possible academic misconduct.

A bibliography is essential and has to be presented in a standard format. Title page, table of contents, page numbers, etc must contribute to the quality of presentation.

The essay must not exceed 4,000 words of narrative. Students should be aware that examiners will not read beyond the 4,000-word limit, nor assess any material presented thereafter.

Criterion E: Engagement

(Strands: Reflections on planning and progress)

This criterion assesses the student's engagement with their research focus and the research process. It will be applied by the examiner at the end of the assessment of the essay, and is based solely on the candidate's reflections as detailed on the [RPPE](#), with the supervisory comments and extended essay itself as context.

Students are expected to provide reflections on the decision-making and planning process undertaken in completing the essay. Students must demonstrate how they arrived at a topic as well as the methods and approach used. This criterion assesses the extent to which a student has evidenced the rationale for decisions made throughout the planning process and the skills and understandings developed.

For example, students may reflect on:

- the approach and strategies they chose, and their relative success
- the [Approaches to learning](#) skills they have developed and their effect on the student as a learner
- how their conceptual understandings have developed or changed as a result of their research
- challenges they faced in their research and how they overcame these questions that emerged as a result of their research **student** thinking, creativity and originality within the research process.

The **student** voice must be clearly present and demonstrate the learning that has taken place.