

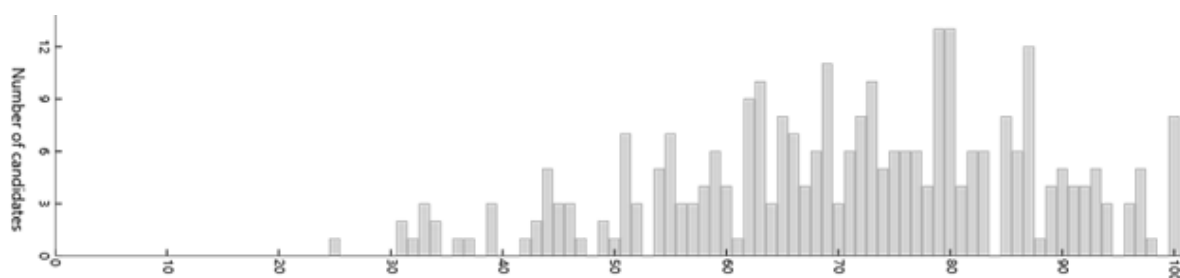


Summary report of the 2024 ATAR course examination report: Music

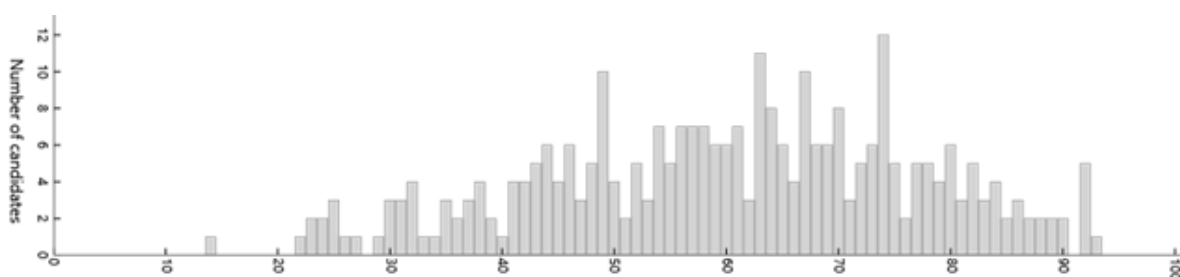
Year	Number who sat all examination components			Number of absentees from all examination components
2024	297			1
	Contemporary Music	Jazz	Western Art Music	
2023	73	34	189	1
2022	63	21	191	3
2021	81	42	196	3

The number of candidates sitting and the number attempting each section of the examination can differ as a result of non-attempts across sections of the examination.

Examination score distribution–Practical



Examination score distribution–Written



Summary

Candidates completed the first practical and written examination in the new course.

Practical examination

Attempted by 298 candidates

Mean 70.99%

Max 100%

Min 25.22%

Section means were:

Performance

Attempted by 279 candidates

Mean 71.17%

Max 100.00% Min 25.22%

Composition portfolio

Attempted by 13 candidates

Mean 71.73%

Max 100.00% Min 32.50%

Performance and Composition portfolio

Attempted by 6 candidates

Mean 60.87%

Max 76.35% Min 43.49%

Written examination

Attempted by 301 candidates

Mean 60.09%

Max 92.56%

Min 13.93%

Section means were:

Music Literacy Part A: Aural

Mean 57.04%

Mean 19.97(/35)

Max 33.85

Min 5.74

Music Literacy Part B: Theory

Mean 72.07%

Mean 14.41(/20)

Max 20.00

Min 0.00

Music analysis Part A: Unseen analysis

Mean 56.72%

Mean 11.34(/20)

Max 20.00

Min 0.00

Music analysis Part B: Designated works

Mean 57.47%

Mean 14.37(/25)

Max 22.36

Min 2.64

General comments

Practical examination

There were a number of ways that a candidate could complete their practical examination.

The number of candidates and their chosen practical examination option were as follows:

Option	Number of candidates
Performance	279
Composition	13
Performance and composition	6

In performance:

- Many of the candidates playing rhythm section instruments in a jazz and contemporary setting lacked a solid time feel or rhythmic integrity about their playing. Security of rhythm was a strength for Western Art music candidates this year.
- The majority of candidates elicited a proficient control of tone this year; there was generally a good level of 'maturity of sound'.
- Most candidates performed a recital that sat within the time requirements, with an appropriate standard of repertoire demonstrated overall.
- Most scores were very well presented with only a handful of candidates not following the directions or requirements.

In composition:

- Most composition candidates applied the fundamental elements of music in their compositions in a satisfactory or proficient manner.
- Some candidates did not have a strong grasp of foundational compositional devices such as rhythmic variation, form, use of non-diatonic harmony, and chord voicings. There were many 'through composed' style pieces.
- Candidates producing music via a DAW for purposes of electronic design or gaming music tended to achieve their contextual purpose quite well. Some jazz compositions lacked a more detailed appreciation for, or understanding of, the idiom.

Advice for candidates

- Where relevant, pay close attention to your intonation in performance. Many candidates often tune correctly, but then proceed to play with very insecure intonation throughout their recitals.
- Work hard to articulate passages at quieter dynamic levels. This was a particularly noticeable challenge for piano candidates this year.
- If using a backing track, it's imperative to use the full allocated setup time to test and sound check, and ensure appropriate balance between the track and the solo candidate part.
- Do not attempt to present pre-written out solos as supposed 'improvised' solos. This would be considered playing a transcription, not improvising as required by the syllabus and performance examination requirements.
- Regularly immerse in the styles of, and listen to, the pieces you are attempting to perform. This will aid to develop stylistic understanding and advanced consideration for phrasing.
- In composition, ensure you meet the portfolio requirements.
- Be explicit in your portfolio to provide musical detail and analysis of elements around compositional choices.

Advice for teachers

- Please ensure students possess the technical skill required to execute the repertoire they will be performing.
- Ensure that intonation is intentionally being taught and listening being developed so that students can be secure in this area.
- Students should choose repertoire that they have a full stylistic understanding of and can execute very well under pressure.
- The stylistics interpretation (Music Theatre) criterion requires two dramatic components to any Music Theatre piece to be addressed: the text and the subtext.
- In composition portfolios, the development of creative ideas should be an area of focus in your teaching.

Written examination

Most candidates attempted all questions in the examination.

Advice for candidates

- Candidates are encouraged and advised to study works in musical context, to develop their agility in being able to answer to similar type questions.
- Look carefully at what the question is asking you – underline key words. If it asks about form, answer about form. If it asks about rhythm, answer about rhythm.
- When asked to describe characteristics/features evident in a provided score extract, candidates should answer with specific characteristics evident in the extract – not general characteristics.

Advice for teachers

- Teachers are advised to explore works and aural excerpts in musical context, rather than isolated, standalone music lines.
- Ensure students can recognise keys and key relationships in Sonata form.
- Exploring many different scores and recordings will assist in developing student agility in answering unseen questions, for example, when a reduced score is provided.
- Unseen analysis questions can be drawn from many styles/genres, allowing for a rich tapestry of musical engagement. Teachers are encouraged to explore this with students.
- Advise of the need to use appropriate and specific music terminology, be it compositional devices, terminology, score directions, expression markings, tempos or time signatures.

Comments on specific sections and questions

Practical examination

Performance

Technique Mean 27.53(/40) Max 40.00 Min 9.33

Some candidates did not possess the technical skill needed to execute the repertoire they were performing; however, the majority of candidates were able to elicit a proficient control of tone and there was generally a good level of 'maturity of sound'. Candidates should choose repertoire that they have a full stylistic understanding of and can execute very well under pressure.

Program requirements Mean 9.63(/10) Max 10.00 Min 4.00

Most candidates performed a recital that sat within the time requirements and most of the scores were very well presented, with only a handful of candidates not following the directions or requirements. The standard of repertoire selected was very good overall. Many candidates performing on violin, piano and classical guitar successfully performed repertoire at 8th grade, AMus or LMus level.

Composition portfolio

Most composition candidates applied the fundamental elements of music in their compositions in a satisfactory or proficient manner. Almost all candidates had a good understanding of notation software and most of the portfolios contained a suitable level of contrast between works. Almost all portfolios had the recording requirements covered, with some very special software synth or VST plugin rendering for some which produced exceptionally accurate recorded emulations of their work. There were several with live recordings of ensembles performing candidate works. The effort some candidates went to is appreciated and worthy of commendation.

Written examination

Section One Music Literacy

Part A: Aural (61 Marks)

All musical examples were provided in context and drawn from a range of different music styles. There was a range of candidate responses, with some excellent answers to all questions and some demonstrating limited ability.

Part B: Theory (18 Marks)

Candidates would do well to focus on their understanding of harmony and chordal construction. While there were some excellent answers, many candidates were unable to respond accurately to harmony/chordal extensions beyond the triad. Transposition challenged a number of candidates, highlighting a fundamental lack of understanding of instrument keys/ranges/clefs and note directions.

Section Two Music analysis

Part A: Unseen analysis (22 Marks)

There was a good opportunity for candidates to apply their musical understanding to a range of unseen musical excerpts. While there were some excellent answers, applying knowledge to a new musical work challenged many candidates. While many candidates showed basic understanding of musical concepts, expression and articulation markings, they were less able to explain their meaning in relation to a piece of music, or in performance.

Part B: Designated works (52 Marks)

The designated works questions required answers to all six designated works across the Identities and Innovations units. Some candidates had not engaged with all six works set for study, as all too often, they misread questions, and/or responded with answers that did not reflect the intent of the question, or in some cases, chose not to respond at all. Nonetheless, there were some very strong answers to all questions from some candidates, who could clearly demonstrate their knowledge and application of Identities and Innovations within the music set for study.