

PRINCIPAL EXAMINER'S REPORT



BOTSWANA
EXAMINATIONS
COUNCIL

JCE MUSIC

2025



INTRODUCTION

Marking Report: 2025 JCE Music Examination

This marking report provides feedback on candidates' performance in the 2025 Junior Certificate Examination (JCE) Music subject, which comprised three components. These were: Paper 1 (Listening Comprehension), Paper 2 (Structured Questions), and Paper 3 (Music Performance), which was assessed through an in-house practical examination.

Assessment for Paper 3, the in-house practical examination, was conducted earlier at school level from 15 September to 26 September 2025, in accordance with the approved assessment guidelines.

This report outlines observations on candidates' performance across the three components and highlights key areas of strength and concern noted during the marking process.



PAPER 1: LISTENING

General Comments

This is a listening paper that tests the listening skills of candidates, made up of three sections, being Section A, B and C. Section A is mainly focused on *Western music traditions*, while section B covers *Botswana indigenous music, Botswana popular and African music*. Section C on the other hand focuses on **aural perception**.

The general performance was mostly below average, with very few candidates in a handful of centers observed to be average. Most candidates had challenges in section A, while in section B and C their performances were generally average as they struggled with items such as question 3b and C which was based on *Botswana indigenous music* in which they could not describe how resonance is achieved in the instrument heard. Question 6 in Section C was also a challenge to almost all candidates, as they could not correctly write the correct scale and the number of half steps between the first and second notes of the scale. Further, question 8 was also a challenge as most candidates could not insert articulation marks on the correct notes as heard in the extract.

In some Centres, candidates would give more than two responses in a question which requires only one response. In most instances, candidates used the correct music vocabulary and terminology, however, irrelevant, and therefore could not get items correct. There was not any recognizable improvement in the general performance of this year's candidates in comparison with their counterparts of the previous year. Below is an account for each section of the paper:

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

The performance of almost all candidates in this section was below standard, with only a very few candidates having an above average performance.

- 1 (a) The performance of candidates in this item was average as candidates were able to name two instruments' families playing at the opening of the extract, while some candidates who instead gave either names of instruments or categories, instead of instrument families.
- (b) Most candidates could not give the correct response in this item, with only a very few candidates who were able to give the correct description of the composer's orchestration. Candidate's performance in this item was below average.
- (c) Most candidates gave incorrect responses on this item as they could not state how the composer created a rich and varied texture of the extract. Candidate's performance in this item was below average.
- (d) Candidates' performance in this item was average as some were able to describe the dynamic changes at the beginning of the extract, and some of the candidates who could not get this item correct wrote tempo markings instead of dynamic levels.



- 2** (a) Performance on this item was below average as almost all candidates could not describe how the extract depicts a canon, only a few candidates were able to get this item correct.
- (b) Candidates' performance was below average on this item, as they could not state how the composer used basso continuo in the extract.
- (c) Candidates could access marks to this item; they mostly gave the correct number of violins playing in the extract. Only a few candidates could give any other number which is not related to the correct response.
- (d) Candidates' performance was above average on this item as most of them were able to state the two characteristics of the extract that reflect typical features of Baroque music. Some candidates could access only one mark from the maximum two marks.

Section B

The performance for this section was average compared to Sections A and C, though most candidates had challenges with question 3a.

- 3** (a) Candidates' performance was below average in this item as they could not describe how resonance was achieved in the instrument heard, some gave the playing techniques of instrument playing instead of the resonance expected.
- (b) Performance on this item was below average, since some candidates could not write what contributes to the texture of the extract. Only a few candidates gave correct responses to this item.
- (c) Most candidates got this item correct as they were able to state the class of indigenous music associated with the instrument.
- (d) Most candidates got this item correct with only a few candidates who mostly wrote voice ranges instead of voice type. The performance in this item was above average.
- 4** (a) Most candidates gave one correct response instead of two, as they could state musical characteristics that define the genre heard, with only a few who managed to give two correct responses as per the item mark allocation.
- (b) Candidates' performance was above average in this item as they were able to write the role played by the choir in the extract. Most candidates gave correct responses in this item.
- (c) Almost all candidates could not get the item correct as they could not describe the role of call and response in the extract. Very few candidates gave correct responses to this item.

- (d) Candidates' performance on this item was average they were able to state what was used to keep a steady beat in the extract, with some who gave incomplete responses and therefore could not get the item correct.
- 5 (a) Candidates' performance on this item was above average as they were able to write the term for the multiple layered rhythms heard in the extract, with some who gave incorrect responses.
- (b) Candidates' performance was above average as they were able to name the two idiophones heard in the extract almost all candidates got this item correct.
- (c) Candidates exhibited an average performance in this item as some were not able state one distinctive feature of the rhythmic patterns of the extract.
- (d) Almost all candidates could not get this item correct as they could not state the vocal feature heard in the extract very few candidates gave correct responses to this item.
- 6 The performance of candidates on this item ranging from below average to average as some candidates could not write the scale in solfege but were able to identify the number of half steps between the first and second notes of the scale and vice versa.
- 7 Most candidates' performance was average in this item as candidates mostly gave a correct form of the excerpt and could identify the articulation mark heard at the beginning of the second phrase. Some gave the correct articulation mark and gave incorrect form while some gave the correct form and incorrect articulation mark
- 8 Candidates' performance in this item was average as they were able to insert articulation marks on the correct notes as heard in the extract on the staff, some could instead insert articulation marks on the incorrect notes.
- 9 Candidates performed above average in this item, they were mostly able to insert notes that have been left out in bar one of the melody, with some who could only insert one note instead of three and could not access marks as per the mark allocation of the item.

CONCLUSION

Candidate's performance was mostly below average as they had more challenges across all sections, though predominantly in section A. For section C, most candidates had challenges with questions 6 and 8. Where they could not insert the correct articulation marks, they also couldn't write the scale and the number of half steps.

Some candidates had challenges with music vocabulary and also gave responses based on their general knowledge instead of what is heard in the extracts. In other instances, candidates gave correct musical terminologies but not in relation to the questions. Candidates also gave more than one response in some items, for example, where they are required to name the texture, they would list all the types of textures instead of giving one correct response.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Expose candidates to different music era/periods.
- Encourage candidates to answer questions in relation to the extracts.
- Candidates should be trained in listening exercises on intervals, scales and textures.
- Candidates should be trained in melody analysis.
- Candidates should be exposed to different extracts of western music, covering renaissance, baroque and classical eras.
- Candidates should be exposed to different music genres and their characteristics.
- Candidates should be exposed to this component regularly through centers' assessment instruments.
- Expose candidates to various instruments so that they can be able to identify sound they produce.
- Candidates should be encouraged to consider mark allocation of each item as they attempt to answer the items. This will assist them to adhere to expected responses.

PAPER 2: STRUCTURED QUESTIONS

General Comments

This examination is a written paper divided into three sections: Section A, Section B, and Section C. Section A comprised short-answer questions covering topics such as the introduction to music, music technology, and music notation. Section B consisted of structured, notation-based questions designed to assess candidates' knowledge, melody analysis, and evaluation skills. Section C focused mainly on short essay questions assessing candidates' understanding of music traditions and music technology.

Overall, candidate performance was below average, with only a small proportion of candidates demonstrating average to slightly above-average achievement. Many candidates obtained very low marks across all sections of the paper.

In Section A, many candidates experienced difficulties in accurately defining musical terms, analyzing notational stimuli, and describing subdivisions of the male voice range. Section B revealed significant weaknesses, as candidates struggled to respond adequately to questions on melody analysis, interval inversions, transposition, and the creation of rhythmic patterns. Similarly, performance in Section C indicated limited understanding, with candidates showing notable difficulties in both music technology and music traditions.

In conclusion, the overall performance of the 2025 cohort was below average. The findings indicate widespread challenges in essential skills, including recall, application, melody analysis, and comprehension of music traditions and music technology.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

- 1 The overall performance on this item was average. Candidates were required to define the musical terms recording and ostinato. Most candidates were able to correctly define recording; however, many experienced difficulties in defining ostinato. Candidates who struggled with this term provided inappropriate responses, such as describing it as a song without a strong beat or as a process of changing the sound of music. There were, however, few candidates who were able to provide the required responses for both terms.
- 2 The overall performance on this item was average. Candidates were required to complete a table by stating two classifications of indigenous music and one style of indigenous music. Most candidates were able to correctly provide either one style and one classification or two classifications. However, a small number of candidates performed below average, while a few demonstrated above-average performance by responding accurately to all aspects of the question.
- 3 Candidates were required to state the minor key and the technical name of the degree of the triad. Most candidates experienced difficulties in providing correct responses. Many incorrectly identified the minor key as G minor and stated supertonic as the technical name

of the degree. Only a small number of candidates were able to correctly state the technical name of the degree of the triad. As a result, the overall performance on this item was below average.

- 4 The performance on this item was below average. Candidates were required to describe any subdivision of the male voice range and to state the fifth note of the supertonic triad in F major. Many candidates were unable to correctly describe subdivisions of the male voice range and instead provided general voice ranges such as bass and tenor. However, a few candidates were able to correctly identify the fifth note of the supertonic triad in F major.

Section B

- 5 Candidates were expected to analyze a melody written on the staff.
- (a) This item was performed below average. Most of the candidates could not state the name of the rest that is missing in bar one (1) but just wrote note values such as quaver and semiquaver.
 - (b) Only a few candidates were able to insert the correct key signature of G major in the appropriate place on the staff, majority of the candidates were placing the key signature in the wrong place such as after the time signature or elsewhere on the staff.
 - (c) The performance of this item was below average; most candidates could not state the significance of staccato on the note.
 - (d) Only few candidates performed better on this item, where they were expected to state the standard beat of the melody, Majority were stating the time signature.
 - (e) Candidates did well on this item especially on (ii) and (iii), where they expected to insert decresc on the las bar of the melody as well as a tie on the appropriate note in bar 1. As for (i), majority of them were inserting the staccato on the wrong notes and in the wrong bars.
 - (f) Majority of Candidates did not do well in this item as they were not able to transpose the given bar, however only few candidates were able to transpose the first four quavers in bar 4 up a major 2nd.
- 6 Candidates were required to create a two-bar rhythmic pattern in a $\frac{3}{4}$ time signature, using semiquavers and crotchets in bar 1, and minims and quavers in bar 2. The overall performance on this item was average, as most candidates were able to either use the correct note values and adhere to the time signature, or use the correct note values in both bars. However, a small number of candidates demonstrated above-average performance by successfully creating a rhythmic pattern that both adhered to the time signature and correctly incorporated all the specified note values.
- 7 The performance on this item was below average, as most candidates were unable to correctly construct and invert the given intervals using C as the root. Only a few candidates were able to construct the intervals; however, they could not correctly invert them. Most

candidates experienced significant difficulties, as evidenced by inappropriate responses such as constructing triads instead of intervals, starting on incorrect root notes, and incorrect placement of notes on the staff.

Section C

- 8 The performance of this item was average; Candidates were required to describe the functions of any two departments in a record company. Most candidates were able to correctly identify the two departments; however, they experienced difficulties in accurately describing their functions or presenting correct descriptions under incorrect department headings. Only a small number of candidates were able to provide fully correct responses by both stating and accurately describing the departments as required. A few candidates who performed poorly on this item instead described individual roles within a music studio, rather than record company departments.
- 9 The performance on this item was average. Candidates were required to discuss an indigenous instrument using the guidelines provided in the stimulus. Most candidates were able to correctly identify the instrument, materials used in its production, and its purpose. However, many candidates experienced difficulties in correctly stating the indigenous music style associated with the instrument.
- 10 Candidates were required to discuss the Classical period using the guidelines given. Performance on this item was below average, as many candidates were unable to adequately discuss the vocal forms and characteristics, identify the main composers, name the musical period from the stimulus, and state the appropriate musical term for the form described in the caption. Only a small number of candidates demonstrated average performance, while very few performed slightly above average by correctly presenting the required responses.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Centres are encouraged to cover the syllabus extensively
- Centres are encouraged to teach melody analysis
- Centres are encouraged to teach intervals and how to apply them even on the stave
- Centres are encouraged to use high order thinking items
- Centres are encouraged to teach transposition and transcription
- Centres are encouraged to teach western traditions, covering renaissance, baroque and classical.
- Centres are encouraged to teach candidates how to respond to essay questions
- Candidates are encouraged to read and understand the items before attempting them and should be advised to use musical terms and vocabulary.



- Centres are to always consider the syllabus scope and content so that they engage meaningfully in teaching and learning
- Discussions should be based on the context of music rather than general knowledge
- Candidates should be taught the copyright and neighboring Rights Act.



PAPER 3: MUSIC PERFORMANCE

General Comments

Candidates are provided with two repertoires being two vocal pieces and two instrumental pieces. Each candidate is expected to perform one piece from each repertoire. Candidates are allowed to use instruments of choice to perform any of the instrumental pieces. On vocal pieces, candidates are allowed to perform at their own vocal ranges with correct intonation. Each candidate is expected to perform all the two pieces in 10 minutes, and they are each given one chance to perform. All the four pieces were performed by almost all centres, however, there were centres that only performed only two pieces by the whole centre, that is one same piece from each repertoire. The vocal pieces were **Green, green grass of home** and **Frosty the Snowman** while the instrumental pieces were **Always on my mind** and **It's Now or Never**.

1 Pitch

There is a gradual improvement on this criterion. Candidates did well on this criterion especially on the keyboard and the recorder. Some candidates had challenges on intonation and placement.

Green, green grass of home and Frosty the snowman

All the pieces did not have wide challenging intervals, as such candidates did well on most of the pitches. There were some candidates who had challenges with projection, placement and Intonation on the piece "Green, green grass of home". The other piece (frosty the snowman") had fewer challenging pitches and candidates who selected it did not have a lot of challenges with intonation.

Always on my mind and It's Now or Never.

There is an improvement on this criterion, especially for candidates who used the keyboard due to its definite pitch. Some notes were either prolonged or shortened. There were candidates who had pitch challenges on the recorder when trying to execute octave E. This has been observed even in the previous year's repertoires.

2 Rhythm

This criterion has been a challenge to candidates in the past years and its continuing to be. Candidates had challenges on this criterion on both pieces. Notes like dotted quavers and dotted crotchets were a challenge in almost all centres in both repertoires.

Green, green grass of home and Frosty the Snowman

This criterion is a challenge to almost all candidates. Dotted notes were not given their full durations. Only a few candidates did well on this criterion.

Always on my mind and It's Now or Never.

Candidates had challenges on this criterion. Most of the rhythms that had dotted notes followed by a quaver or crotchet were a challenge to most candidates.



3 Tempo

The vocal pieces did not have the set tempo while the instrumental pieces had the set tempo. In such instances, candidates were expected to set own and maintain it throughout. The instrumental pieces had set tempo.

Green, green grass of home and Frosty the Snowman

The two pieces did not have tempo marks. Most candidates did not do well on this criterion in both pieces because they were not able to maintain the chosen tempo. However there a few who did well on this criterion by maintaining the tempo they set for themselves.

Always on my mind and It's Now or Never.

Most candidates did well on this criterion. The two pieces had tempo and most candidates managed to maintain it. The few that started with inappropriate tempo marks managed to maintain them throughout the performances.

4.1 Dynamics

Only one vocal piece did not have dynamics while the other three had them. In a piece that does not have dynamics, candidates are expected to interpret the piece and use their musicianship skills. Most of the candidates did well on this criterion in both vocal and instrumental pieces. However, there were a few candidates who did not express themselves clearly on this criterion. Candidates who used the keyboards without touch response had challenges in expressing dynamics.

4.2 Phrasing

There was an improvement on this criterion. Most of the phrases were short, as such most candidates managed to complete them with ease.

Green, green grass of home and Frosty the Snowman

Most of the phrases were short as such most candidates managed to complete them. There were a few exceptions were some candidates combined phrases and failed to complete them.

Always on my mind and It's Now or Never.

Most of the candidates did well on phrases. Some of the phrases were marked by rests, while others required musical interpretation by candidates. A few candidates had challenges with phrases that had a semi-breve tied to minim, especially on keyboards without touch response

4.3 Diction (Vocal)

Green, green grass of home and Frosty the Snowman

Most candidates did well on this criterion. Most of words were audible except in a few situations where candidates would have chosen lower keys.



4.3 Articulation (Instrumental)

Always on my mind and It's Now or Never.

Most candidates did well on this criterion on both the recorder and the keyboard. All articulation marks were clearly articulated. Slurs and staccato marks were effectively executed.

5 TECHNICAL SKILLS.

Instrumental

Most of the candidates ranged from average to above average, on this criterion. Candidates mostly used the recorder and the keyboard in their instrumental repertoires.

Recorder

There were a few who had limited skill on the recorder which was demonstrated by failure to articulate accent and high E. The challenges on Octave E are occurring on a yearly basis. Some candidates played from the memory; this was evidenced by failure to continue from where they stopped in cases where they made mistakes during performance.

Keyboard

There are centres that are still using keyboards without the touch response, which is affecting execution of dynamics. Placement of the keyboard in some centres also affected some candidates. It was either high or low for them as such it affected their posture. There were few marked keyboards in the 2025 series as compared to other years.

Vocal

There was an improvement in some centres on this criterion. Some candidates were able to select proper voice ranges, which enabled them to perform with ease. However, there were a few who did not do well on this criterion, especially the male candidates who used low voice ranges.

Conclusion

The general performance was satisfactory, ranging between average to above average. There were no cases where the entire candidature per centre could not perform, even cases of unprescribed performances were reduced. However, there were a few who chanted vocal pieces and those who could not perform or complete instrumental pieces. Most centres were only performing two pieces.

Recommendations

1. Expose candidates to all pieces so as to have a good choice.
2. Candidates should be trained to express dynamics on instruments of choice.
3. Touch response keyboards should be used as candidates prepare for the examination.
4. Keyboards should be placed in a manner that they will not disadvantage other candidates, e.g. being placed on higher surfaces, as this will disadvantage the short ones.
5. Voice training is required to nurture vocal skills.

PAPER 4: COURSEWORK

Administration Of Coursework At Centre Level

The team noted that most centres are still not adhering to standards of administering course work. It has been observed with most centres that candidates are assessed when they have advanced skill. For example, Form 1 and 2 tasks are assessed when candidates are at Form 3. Sight tasks (1.1, 1.2 and 2.1) are exposed to candidates as prior assessment by most centres. For Task 3.1 (Improvising national Anthem with chords I, IV, V), several candidates were not assessed on this task. Many played the melody without chords. Task 3.2 (Ensembles) was appropriately marked by most centres. Videos were well labelled making clips user friendly.

N:B-The coursework assessment manual has been provided to schools, and it elaborates on time and stages at which music coursework tasks are to be administered/assessed during the 3-year course. A training workshop by BEC for all Centres was conducted in May to capacitate Centres in general coursework related matters i.e. administration, standardisation, marking, packaging and submission.

Video Evidence Vs Scores/Marks

Most Centres submitted video clips to validate scores they awarded for each task. It has been noted that most centres were too lenient in awarding marks and a significant number of centres were harsh on some candidates. The deviations of several centres tempered with order of merits hence; such centres were recommended for remarking.

Conclusion

Generally, administration of Music Coursework (Video shooting and labelling, packaging) was fairly done by most centres. Some centres did not assess candidates at the appropriate time making candidates to access more marks. Most centres did not apply the marking criterion correctly leading to leniency or harshness. Most Centres submitted candidate's coursework/project and there was a significant number of candidates with incomplete projects.

Recommendations

Centres are advised to:

- Consult with Music Coursework Manual prior to conducting assessment.
- Effectively standardise before marking candidates' work.
- Apply the marking criterion fairly and consistently.
- Assess all Candidates tasks and present a complete coursework for each candidate .i.e. 11 tasks for each candidate.