

Junior Cycle Music

Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessments

First Edition

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Introduction

This document, *Junior Cycle Music: Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessments* provides:

- general information on Classroom-Based Assessments
- detail of the nature and scope of the Classroom-Based Assessments described in the specification for Junior Cycle Music
- the Features of Quality used to describe the level of achievement for each Classroom-Based Assessment
- guidelines for schools, teachers and students on completing the Classroom-Based Assessments.

These guidelines should be used in conjunction with the curriculum specification for Junior Cycle Music and the *Assessment and Reporting* guidelines for junior cycle, which include further details of the subject learning and assessment review process and other aspects of junior cycle assessment set out in these guidelines.

All documentation can be accessed at <http://www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Junior-Cycle-Subjects/Music>. An outline of assessment in junior cycle can be found in the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015, which can be accessed at <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Framework-for-Junior-Cycle-2015.pdf>.

Classroom-Based Assessments: General Information

Classroom-Based Assessments (CBA) are best described as the occasions when the teacher assesses the students using the specific tasks set out in the subject specification. They are included within the time allocated for Music, which is a minimum of 200 hours. The Classroom-Based Assessments and the Features of Quality, which support teacher judgement, are set out in these guidelines.

Although the assessment is similar to the ongoing assessment that occurs every day in class, in the case of Classroom-Based Assessments, the teacher's judgement is recorded for Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings and is used in the school's reporting to parents and students. Students prepare for the Classroom-Based Assessments over specified periods of time in second and third year. The results of other projects, homework or tests undertaken by the students in the course

of their normal classwork do not add up to the award of a descriptor for the Classroom-Based Assessment.

The autonomy of the school in preparing students for the Classroom-Based Assessments

These guidelines set out a range of options for the Classroom-Based Assessments so that they can suit the particular needs and circumstances of students and the school. There are two Classroom-Based Assessments: the first, held in year two, is a *Composition Portfolio* and the second, in year three, is a *Programme Note* that will support and illuminate the performance for the practical examination.

Students and teachers have a choice and are offered flexibility in the format and approach taken for each Classroom-Based Assessment. A variety of possibilities are offered as to how both can be presented, the genres that may be explored, the modes of presentation utilised, any support materials, and the role the teacher plays in facilitating the students' engagement with the assessments. Within the parameters set by these guidelines, the range of topics and approaches in both Classroom-Based Assessments can be determined independently by the school, teachers and students.

How the school supports the completion of the Classroom-Based Assessments

The school supports the completion of the assessments by:

- ensuring that the *Junior Cycle Music Specification* and *Junior Cycle Music: Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessments* are provided to teachers
- supporting teachers in recording the level descriptors awarded to each student
- retaining records and pieces of work, as appropriate, for the purposes of Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings
- applying the guidelines for Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings
- applying inclusive assessment practices and ensuring accessibility of assessment for all students
- reporting the outcomes of Classroom-Based Assessments to students and their parents/guardians as part of the school's on-going reporting procedures and through the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

Further information can be found at <http://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting>

To facilitate providing feedback to students during their engagement with assessment, the process of completing the Classroom-Based Assessments should be viewed as part of teaching and learning, and not solely for assessment purposes. It is envisaged that teachers will guide, support and supervise throughout the process.

Support may include:

- clarifying the requirements of the task
- using annotated examples of student work to clarify the meaning and interpretation of the Features of Quality to students
- providing instructions at strategic intervals to facilitate the timely completion of the assessments
- providing supports for students with special educational needs (SEN).

Note that only work which is the student's own can be accepted for assessment in the JCPA.

Inclusive assessment practices

Schools facilitate inclusive assessment practices whether as part of ongoing assessment or Classroom-Based Assessments. Where a school judges that a student has a specific physical or learning difficulty, reasonable supports may be put in place to remove, as far as possible, the impact of the disability on the student's performance in Classroom-Based Assessments. These supports e.g. the support provided by a special needs assistant or the support of assistive technologies, should be in line with the arrangements the school has put in place to support the student's learning throughout the year.

Classroom-Based Assessments in Music

There are two Classroom-Based Assessments in Music. They are assessed at a common level. They relate to specified learning outcomes and are scheduled to be undertaken by students in a defined time period within class contact time to a national timetable (as advised by the NCCA) in the school calendar. Following the second Classroom-Based Assessment, students will complete a practical examination which is marked by the State Examinations Commission as part of the final examination in Music. The Classroom-Based Assessments for Music and the indicative timings are outlined in Table 1 below.

Classroom-Based Assessments	Format	Student preparation	Completed
Composition Portfolio	Two pieces chosen by the student from his/her portfolio	Compositions are produced over time with support and guidance from teacher	Towards the end of Year 2
Programme Note	Individual or group programme note in chosen format	During a maximum of 3 weeks, with support and guidance from teacher	Term 2 of Year 3

Table 1: Classroom-Based Assessments for Music

Classroom-Based Assessment 1: Composition Portfolio

This Classroom-Based Assessment offers students an opportunity to celebrate their achievements as creators of music artefacts, by compiling a collection of their musical ideas and creative expressions in a variety of genres and styles over time. The process of gathering and collecting their musical ideas into a portfolio, supports students in developing their music voice, and allows their musical self and identity to emerge.

The development of creative expression is a central tenet of this subject, as outlined in the rationale and the aim in the specification. It is important to instil in students a creative disposition where they are free to experiment, allowed to take risks, encouraged to explore new and challenging opportunities and reflect on this creative process. When composing and creating music for a chosen audience or for a particular purpose, students learn how to bring an idea from concept to realisation.

The learning outcomes assessed will, to an extent, depend on the musical style chosen and the medium in which the work is presented. Some that may be particularly relevant are:

Classroom-Based Assessment: Composition Portfolio		
Procedural knowledge	Innovate and ideate	Culture and context
<p>1.1 compose and perform or play back short musical phrases and support these phrases by creating rhythmic/melodic/harmonic ostinati to accompany them</p> <p>1.2 create and present a short piece, using instruments and/or other sounds in response to a stimulus</p> <p>1.3 design a harmonic or rhythmic accompaniment, record this accompaniment and improvise over this recording</p>	<p>2.1 experiment and improvise with making different types of sound on a sound source and notate a brief piece that incorporates the sounds by devising symbolic representations for these sounds</p> <p>2.2 create a musical statement (such as a rap or an advertising jingle) about a topical issue or current event and share with others the statement’s purpose and development</p>	<p>3.4 compose and perform an original jingle or brief piece of music for use in a new advertisement for a product, and record the composition</p> <p>3.5 devise and perform examples of incidental music that could be used in a variety of contexts or environments</p> <p>3.9 investigate the influence of processing effects (e.g. distortion, reverb, compression) on the recording process; select some recordings and evaluate the</p>

<p>1.4 indicate chords that are suitable to provide harmonic support to a single melodic line</p> <p>1.12 indicate where chord changes occur in extracts from a selection of songs.</p>	<p>2.3 adapt excerpts or motifs/themes from an existing piece of music by changing its feel, style or underlying harmony</p> <p>2.7 create and present some musical ideas using instruments and/or found sounds to illustrate moods or feelings expressed in a poem, story or newspaper article.</p>	<p>use and effectiveness of such effects within them.</p>
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Guidelines for completion of the Classroom-Based Assessment 1:

Composition Portfolio

Figure 1 below sets out the process for conducting Classroom-Based Assessment 1. The aim of this process is to provide guidance for teachers as they support their students completing Classroom-Based Assessment 1.



Figure 1 Process for conducting Classroom-Based Assessments

Getting Ready

Student preparation

Students should have developed some knowledge, understanding and skills across the strands of study: Procedural Knowledge, Innovate and Ideate and Culture and Context, in order to compile this portfolio.

In the majority of cases, the work in the student's portfolio will arise from the ebb and flow of classroom practice. The development of the student's skills as a creator of a musical idea or ideas, and the communication of these ideas is the main purpose of the process. The collection of student compositions promotes student engagement when students:

- identify and choose the stimulus for the creative work
- choose the format(s) in which to create the piece of music
- develop their ideas through engagement with other aspects of the music course
- collaborate through the discussion and exploration of ideas and motifs.

It is important that the musical choices that have been considered by the student are central to the creative process. These decisions might include:

- Who is the intended audience for this piece?
- What kind of notation/sound symbols will be most suitable?
- What instruments or voices will best suit this composition?
- What style or genre will best match this piece?
- Will the composition focus on melodic, harmonic or rhythmic elements?
- What structural approach is the most suitable?
- What kinds of processing effects, or vocal effects could be added to the composition?

This list is a indicative list of the questions that students and teachers should consider as they engage in the creative process. At an appropriate moment in their learning, students should be familiarised with the Features of Quality that will be used to judge the quality of their work.

Teacher preparation

Programme planning by the teacher needs to develop students' knowledge, understanding, skills and values across the learning outcomes of the specification incrementally in advance of and during the completion of the Classroom-Based Assessment. The role of the teacher should be to guide, support, enable and provide direction to students as they complete the Composition Portfolio Classroom-Based Assessment.

In order to prepare for the Classroom-Based Assessment, teachers should familiarise themselves with the following documentation available on www.curriculumonline.ie:

- Junior Cycle Music Specification
- Junior Cycle Music: Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessment
- Annotated examples of student work
- Assessment and Reporting in junior cycle (www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting).

Completing the Classroom-Based Assessment 1: Composition

Portfolio



Two pieces from the portfolio of compositions will be selected by the student for assessment purposes. The focus of this assessment activity is on the creation of a set of musical compositions, ideas or motifs, which might include the following options:

- responding to an auditory or visual stimulus
- arranging an existing piece of music
- creating an answering phrase to an existing phrase
- adding music to a text
- responding to a story or a literary text
- creating an advertisement jingle
- devising a piece of electro-acoustic music
- creating an anthem or a musical piece for a school event
- composing music in response to a personal experience.

Underlying and informing this Classroom-Based Assessment is a focus on the developmental nature of creating and composing, and on developing the student's understanding of this creative and often imaginative process. This will be best supported by consistent creative endeavours in the art and craft of making music both in the classroom and at home. To this end, students will include any draft work relating to these artefacts, although this work will not be assigned a descriptor.

Note that this list of types, styles, genres and responses above is not intended to be exhaustive, but serves to suggest that the collection should be a varied one. The options listed above may overlap, and this is to be expected, and there is no restriction on the choices that students can make. The compositions can be in any recognised musical style or genre, and can be written for instrument or voice and as a solo or group composition. It can be presented in written, digital, visual or audio form, or any other format that is deemed suitable by the student and appropriate for capturing the essence of their ideas.

Students will choose two pieces from their collection, and will present these for assessment purposes towards the end of Year Two. A student reflection note must be included with each of the pieces submitted. This is intended to give students the opportunity to set out a brief statement on the purpose or intention for the creative idea, and asks the student to indicate what they have learnt from the creative process. It also offers the student the space to consider what they might do differently on a subsequent occasion.

A template for a Student Reflection Note is provided in Appendix A.

Composition Portfolio: Advice for students

Work for this assessment will be monitored and supported by your teacher. You are free to choose any two pieces that you have created, composed, adapted or imagined, but in selecting these two pieces you should consider why you have selected these particular two.

In considering what pieces to select you could ask yourself:

- What two pieces am I most proud of?
- Which pieces show the greatest progression from earlier concepts or ideas to realisation?
- Do the pieces chosen represent a variety of genres/styles/medium?

You may work on the Classroom-Based Assessment in pairs or groups. However, please note that it will be your individual role and contribution to the work that is the focus of assessment for the JCPA.

The pieces you submit should show evidence of the musical choices you have undergone to reach your decisions on how to present your musical ideas. These choices could include:

- What instrument(s) will I choose?
- What style will I choose?
- Will this be written for a group or for a soloist?
- What processing or recording effects could be added to this music?
- Who is my audience for this?
- What should I call this piece of music?

You must complete a written Student Reflection Note for each of the two pieces. This will include the title or the theme, a brief note as to how the idea came about and a reflection on what you have learnt from creating this piece of music (See Appendix A).

You may find it easier to reflect and make notes on each piece immediately after you create it, rather than waiting until you have reached the moment where you are selecting your pieces to submit for the Classroom-Based Assessment.

Deciding on the level of achievement: Composition Portfolio



Features of Quality

There are four level descriptors of achievement in this Classroom-Based Assessment: *Exceptional*, *Above expectations*, *In line with expectations*, and *Yet to meet expectations*. All work submitted is judged to fit one of these four descriptors.

Teachers use the Features of Quality, set out in these guidelines below, to decide the level of achievement in this Classroom-Based Assessment. The Features of Quality are the criteria that will be used to assess the student work as best fitting one of the following descriptors:

Exceptional describes a piece of work that reflects the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment to a very high standard. While not necessarily perfect, the strengths of the work far outstrip its flaws, which are minor. Suggestions for improvement are easily addressable by the student.

Above expectations describes a piece of work that reflects the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment very well. The student shows a clear understanding of how to complete each area of the task. Feedback from the teacher might point to the necessity to address some aspect of the work in need of further attention or polishing, but on the whole the work is of a high standard.

In line with expectations describes a piece of work that reflects most of the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment well. It shows a good understanding of the task in hand and is free from significant error. Feedback might point to areas needing further attention or correction, but the work is generally competent and accurate.

Yet to meet expectations describes a piece of work that falls somewhat short of the demands of the Classroom-Based Assessment and its associated Features of Quality. Perhaps the student has made a good attempt, but the task has not been grasped clearly or is marred by significant lapses. Feedback will draw attention to fundamental shortcomings that need to be addressed.

When using the Features of Quality to assess the level of student achievement in a Classroom-Based Assessment, teachers use 'on-balance' judgement. The teacher should read the Features of Quality (starting with *Yet to meet expectation*) until they reach a descriptor that best describes the work being assessed. While it should be noted that none of the descriptors imply faultless achievement, evidence of work for the award of Exceptional should closely match the criteria for that level within the Features of Quality. Where it is not clearly evident which quality descriptor should apply, teachers must come to judgement, based on the evidence from the student's work, to select the descriptor that best matches the student's work overall. This 'best fit' approach allows teachers to select the descriptor that 'on balance' describes the work being assessed.

Teachers should not assume that the results of a group of students being assessed will follow any particular distribution pattern, as the students' work is being judged only against the Features of Quality rather than other students' performances.

Teacher judgements about the quality of student work, with the aim of arriving at a shared understanding of standards and expectations, are supported by annotated examples of student work published on <http://www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Junior-Cycle-Subjects/Music>; by the Features of Quality in these guidelines; and by collaboration and discussion with colleagues during Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings.

Features of Quality: Music – Composition Portfolio

Exceptional

- Melodic, rhythmic or harmonic concepts are very highly developed in a thoroughly skilful and sophisticated way, resulting in compositions that are highly original and imaginative
- There is very strong evidence of an understanding of the appropriateness of the chosen instruments/effects/medium/genre
- The pieces of music are shaped to a very clear purpose, and fully realised for their intended receiver/audience.

Above expectations

- Melodic, rhythmic or harmonic concepts are very well developed in a skilful and sophisticated way, resulting in compositions that are original and imaginative
- There is strong evidence of an understanding of the appropriateness of the chosen instruments/effects/medium/genre
- The pieces of music are shaped to their intended purpose, and realised very well for its intended receiver/audience.

In line with expectations

- Melodic, rhythmic or harmonic concepts are well developed resulting in compositions that have evidence of some originality and some imagination
- There is an adequate understanding of the appropriateness of the chosen instruments/effects/medium/genre
- The pieces of music are shaped to a purpose and realised well for its intended receiver/audience.

Yet to meet expectations

- Melodic, rhythmic or harmonic concepts are insufficiently developed resulting in compositions that are lacking in originality and imagination
- There is lack of evidence of understanding and inconsistency in the appropriateness of the chosen instruments/effects/medium/genre
- The pieces of music are lacking a purpose, and show limited consideration or awareness of the intended receiver/audience.

Classroom-Based Assessment 2: Programme Note

For this Classroom-Based Assessment, students will prepare a Programme Note to inform an audience on the content of their upcoming performance which itself will comprise the practical examination.

The Programme Note is intended to illuminate the content of the upcoming performance in an interesting and relevant way. While this illumination is important for the audience, it also enriches the performance by the student.

The provision of some background information on the lives of the composers or songwriters can provide important insights into their intentions, and an understanding of the wider context of the music to be performed. Providing the listener and the audience with signposts and indicators of what to listen out for and giving them some interesting anecdotes about the composer/songwriter of the piece, enlightens and enhances the listener's experience.

The learning outcomes assessed will, to an extent, depend on the musical style chosen and the medium in which the work is presented. Some that may be particularly relevant are:

Classroom-Based Assessment: Programme Note		
Procedural knowledge	Innovate and ideate	Culture and context
<p>1.10 discuss the characteristics and defining features of contrasting styles of music represented in the school or local community</p> <p>1.11 illustrate the structure of a piece of music through a physical or visual representation</p> <p>1.13 compare different interpretations or arrangements of a piece of Irish traditional or folk music,</p>	<p>2.4 rehearse and present a song or brief instrumental piece; identify and discuss the performance skills and techniques that were necessary to interpret the music effectively</p> <p>2.5 prepare and rehearse a musical piece for an ensemble, focusing on co-operation and listening for balance and intonation; refine the interpretation by considering elements such as clarity, fluency, musical effect and style</p>	<p>3.2 examine and interpret the impact of music on the depiction of characters, their relationships and their emotions, as explored in instrumental music of different genres</p> <p>3.7 compare compositions by two or more Irish composers or songwriters; use listening, background reading and scores (where appropriate) to explain and describe differences and</p>

<p>paying attention to musical elements and other influences</p> <p>1.14 compare pieces of music that are similar in period and style by different composers from different countries.</p>	<p>2.10 develop a set of criteria for evaluating a live or recorded performance; use these criteria to complete an in-depth review of a performance.</p>	<p>similarities in the compositions.</p>
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Guidelines for completion of the Classroom-Based Assessment 2:

Programme Note

Figure 2 below sets out the process for conducting Classroom-Based Assessment 2. The aim of this process is to provide guidance for teachers as they support their students completing Classroom-Based Assessment 2.

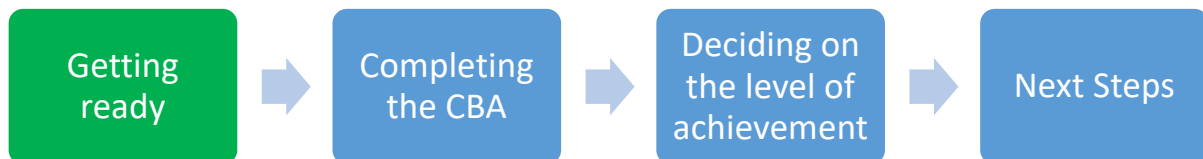


Figure 2 Process for conducting Classroom-Based Assessments

Student preparation

Students should have developed some knowledge, understanding and skills across the three strands of study: Procedural Knowledge, Innovate and Ideate and Culture and Context, in order to undertake the completion of the Programme Note. As part of ongoing teaching, learning and assessment of the learning outcomes for Music, students should have opportunities to develop research skills as well as have opportunities to discuss their own work as well as that of their peers. At an appropriate moment in their learning, students should be familiarised with the Features of Quality that will be used to judge the quality of their work.

Teacher preparation

Programme planning by the teacher needs to develop students' knowledge, understanding, skills and values across the learning outcomes of the specification incrementally. In order to prepare for the Classroom-Based Assessment, teachers should familiarise themselves with the following documentation available on www.curriculumonline.ie

- Junior Cycle Music Specification
- Junior Cycle Music: Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessment
- Annotated examples of student work
- Assessment and Reporting in junior cycle (www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting).

Completing the Classroom-Based Assessment 2: Programme Note



The Programme Note will need to be completed two weeks in advance of the practical examination, which usually takes place towards the end of term 2 of year 3, or the start of term 3 of year 3. The Programme Note should take no more than three weeks to complete, and should be completed with support and guidance from the teacher.

While there is no set or particular approach advocated for the format and structure of the Programme Note, it could include the following:

- a brief introduction to the composers/songwriters (if applicable)
- a description about the historical context of the pieces and the circumstances surrounding the composition
- one interesting musical point in each piece for the listener/audience to listen out for
- famous exponents of a tune or an instrument
- the student's role in a group performance.

The structure of the Programme Note will be influenced by many factors. What will be included for a performance in a traditional Irish style, will be very different from what might be included in a Baroque classical style. What will be highlighted in a solo instrumental or vocal performance will be different from that highlighted or detailed in a group performance. There must be a reference to each of the three pieces in the Programme Note.

Thus, the Programme Note will be as varied and as unique as each individual performance by each student and this is an essential consideration in creating this note. Students, therefore, are offered and afforded flexibility in allowing for different degrees of emphasis to be focused on different musical elements and features.

This Programme Note will be submitted to the teacher two weeks in advance of the starting date of the practical examination in that school. This will ensure that the time needed to prepare for the practical examination is not encroached upon. The mode of presentation for this Classroom-Based Assessment is open to students, and it can be presented in a written, digital, visual or audio form, or any other format that is deemed suitable by the student and appropriate for capturing the essence of what they want to communicate about their upcoming performance.

Classroom-Based Assessment: Programme Note: Advice for students

Work for this assessment will be monitored and supported by your teacher. You will need to include in this Programme Note some facts on the composer or the songwriter, some interesting points about the purpose behind the composition and some musical highlights so that the audience or the listener can be alerted to and be aware of the context of the pieces for your practical examination.

In considering what information to include you could ask yourself the following questions for each piece:

- Who is the composer/songwriter of this piece?
- Why did the composer/songwriter write this music?
- If the composer or songwriter is unknown (for example in the case of some traditional music or folk music) what type of instrumental or vocal piece is this?
- Who are some famous exponents of this type of traditional or folk music?
- What was happening in the composer's country at the time of this composition?

- Is this piece typical of the time it was written or collected in?
- What is the most interesting moment in this piece for me?
- What do I want the attention of the listener to be guided towards?
- What is or where is my favourite section of this piece?

Whether you are performing as a soloist or as part of group, or a combination of both, you will still need to provide an individual programme note, but the note on the group performance should include a comment on your role and contribution to the group performance. Note, it will be your individual Programme Note that is the focus of assessment for the JCPA.

If you are the composer of any of the pieces that comprise your programme for the practical examination, you should comment on and reflect upon these questions above in the same manner.

The structure of the Programme Note is left to your discretion, and you have the choice and the flexibility to present this in a format of your choosing, and in a way that allows you to focus on the aspects relevant to your upcoming performance. As programme notes are usually accessed by people with a wide variety of background knowledge, the challenge is in creating notes that cater for this range and provide something of interest to both the well informed listener and the novice listener.

This Programme Note will need to be completed two weeks in advance of the practical examination and it is advised that you spend no more than three weeks on researching and completing the Programme Note. You may find it easier to complete your Programme Note as you learn your pieces as this research will also inform your practicing and refining of these pieces in preparation for the practical examination.

Deciding on the level of achievement: Programme Note



Features of Quality

There are four level descriptors of achievement in this Classroom-Based Assessment: *Exceptional*, *Above expectations*, *In line with expectations*, and *Yet to meet expectations*. All work submitted is judged to fit one of these four descriptors.

Teachers use the Features of Quality, set out in these guidelines below, to decide the level of achievement in this Classroom-Based Assessment. The Features of Quality are the criteria that will be used to assess the student work as best fitting one of the following descriptors:

Exceptional describes a piece of work that reflects the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment to a very high standard. While not necessarily perfect, the strengths of the work far outstrip its flaws, which are minor. Suggestions for improvement are easily addressable by the student.

Above expectations describes a piece of work that reflects the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment very well. The student shows a clear understanding of how to complete each area of the task. Feedback from the teacher might point to the necessity to address some aspect of the work in need of further attention or polishing, but on the whole the work is of a high standard.

In line with expectations describes a piece of work that reflects most of the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment well. It shows a good understanding of the task in hand and is free from significant error. Feedback might point to areas needing further attention or correction, but the work is generally competent and accurate.

Yet to meet expectations describes a piece of work that falls somewhat short of the demands of the Classroom-Based Assessment and its associated Features of Quality. Perhaps the student has made a good attempt, but the task has not been grasped clearly or is marred by significant lapses. Feedback will draw attention to fundamental shortcomings that need to be addressed.

When using the Features of Quality to assess the level of student achievement in a Classroom-Based Assessment, teachers use 'on-balance' judgement. The teacher should read the Features of Quality (starting with *Yet to meet expectation*) until they reach a descriptor that best describes the work being assessed. While it should be noted that none of the descriptors imply faultless achievement, evidence of work for the award of *Exceptional* should closely match the criteria for that level within the Features of Quality. Where it is not clearly evident which quality descriptor should apply, teachers must come to judgement, based on the evidence from the student's work, to select the descriptor that best matches the student's work overall. This 'best fit' approach allows teachers to select the descriptor that 'on balance' describes the work being assessed.

Teachers should not assume that the results of a group of students being assessed will follow any particular distribution pattern, as the students' work is being judged only against the Features of Quality rather than other students' performances.

Teacher judgements about the quality of student work, with the aim of arriving at a shared understanding of standards and expectations, are supported by annotated examples of student work published on <http://www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Junior-Cycle-Subjects/Music>; by the Features of Quality in these guidelines; and by collaboration and discussion with colleagues during Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings.

Features of Quality: Music: Programme Note

Exceptional

- Programme Note offers, to a very high standard, concise, compelling and highly interesting details of the pieces that provide very detailed insights with comprehensive supports for the listener
- In-depth and very detailed information is provided on the historical context or purpose of composition
- The biographical details of the composer/songwriter/exponents of the style show evidence of a very high level of initiative in research.

Above expectations

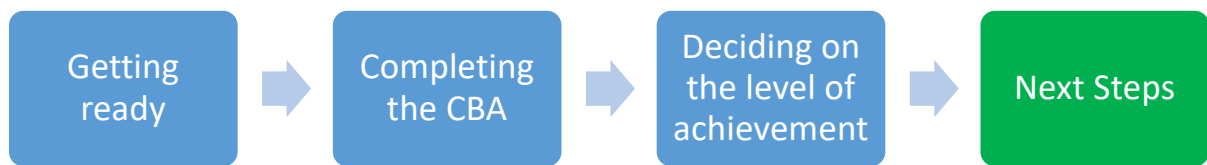
- Programme Note offers concise, compelling and interesting details of the pieces that are very clear and provide detailed insights with very good supports for the listener
- In-depth and detailed information is provided on the historical context or purpose of composition
- The biographical details of the composer/songwriter/exponents of the style show evidence of a high level of initiative in research.

In line with expectations

- Programme Note adequately offers a few interesting facts and details of the pieces that are clear and provide some insights with good supports for the listener
- Adequate information and background is provided on the historical context or purpose of composition
- The biographical details of the composer/songwriter/exponents of the style show evidence of some level of initiative in research.

Yet to meet expectations

- Programme Note offers limited facts and details of the pieces and provides the listener with little or no insights to support them
- Limited information and background is provided on the historical context or purpose of composition
- The biographical details of the composer/songwriter/exponents of the style show a lack of evidence of research or independent reading.



Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting

Shared understanding of standards within junior cycle will arise through professional discussion in Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings, where staff bring their own examples of student work and compare their judgements with other colleagues and with annotated examples of student work provided by the NCCA. Over time, this process will help develop a greater understanding of standards and ensure consistency of judgement about student performance.

Samples of CBA 1: Composition Portfolio and CBA 2: Programme Note by students will be gathered for discussion at the Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings. In preparation for the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting, each teacher will identify one sample of students' work for each descriptor, where feasible, and will have these available for discussion at the meeting. Further details on managing and participating in the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting are included in Appendix B and can be accessed at <https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting/slar-meetings>.

While this process can be organised more easily within a school where there is more than one music teacher, in a school with one music teacher, it is recommended that the music teacher discuss the assessment arrangements with their school facilitator/management with a view to contacting and co-ordinating with teachers from nearby schools. The teacher along with their colleagues can plan and agree a date for the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting.

Recording and reporting Classroom-Based Assessment results

Following the Subject Learning and Assessment Review, each individual teacher re-considers the judgement they had made of their student's work, based on the outcomes of the meeting, and where necessary makes the appropriate adjustments to the level of achievement awarded to the work. A record of the final descriptors awarded is kept by the class teacher and is shared with the school principal. The descriptors awarded are used in reporting progress and achievement to parents and

students as part of the school's ongoing reporting procedures and through the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

Where it arises that a student does not submit any work for their Classroom-Based Assessment, a descriptor cannot be awarded, as there is no work to discuss against the Features of Quality. In such cases, 'Not reported' should be selected when inputting results for the JCPA. Further information in relation to reporting Classroom-Based Assessment descriptors for the JCPA is available from the DES at the following link: <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services>Returns/Post-Primary-Online-Database-P-POD-Project/>

Using feedback

Providing effective feedback is a crucial step in using CBA 1: Composition Portfolio and CBA 2: Programme Note to support student learning. Students will be informed of the descriptor they have been awarded once the Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meeting has taken place and its outcomes have been processed. However, effective feedback goes beyond the naming of the descriptor awarded. Feedback on the strengths of the student's work, and on areas for improvement can be used to support their future learning. Further information on the use of feedback can be found at <https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting/focus-on-learning/focus-on-learning>.

Querying a result

Queries in relation to the descriptors awarded for the Classroom-Based Assessments, where they arise, will be dealt with by the school.

Useful links

- Framework for Junior Cycle: An outline of assessment in junior cycle can be found in the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015, which can be accessed at <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Framework-for-Junior-Cycle-2015.pdf>.
- Assessment in junior cycle: All documentation relating to assessment at junior cycle can be accessed at <https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting>.
- State Examinations Commission: All instructions for the final examination will be included in a brief, issued by the State Examinations Commission (SEC) during the third year of junior cycle on www.examinations.ie.
- Curriculum specification for Junior Cycle Music: <http://www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Junior-Cycle-Subjects/Music>.

Appendix A: Template for Student Reflection on Composition

Portfolio

SCHOOL		STUDENT
Title or theme of composition:		
Purpose and context of composition:		
Where did I get the ideas for this composition?	My composition could be used for...	
My assessment of my work:		
What I learned from creating this composition:		
What I would do differently next time:		
Student:	Teacher:	Date:

Appendix B: Support for teacher judgement: Subject Learning and Assessment Review

Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings enable teachers to collaboratively reach consistency in their judgments of student work against common, externally-set Features of Quality. Greater understanding of standards and expectations will develop over time as teachers come together in professional discussion to reflect on the quality of their own students' work, informed by the subject specification, assessment guidelines and other support material including annotated examples of students' work provided by the NCCA.

Overview

The review process is centred on teachers discussing student work at structured meetings. It will play an important role in helping teachers to develop an understanding of standards and expectations by enabling them to reflect on the evidence of students' work and to share the learning and teaching strategies supporting that work.

The objectives of the review process are to achieve

- greater consistency of teachers' judgement
- better feedback to students
- greater alignment of judgements with expected standards

and to assure parents and others, that students are receiving appropriate recognition of their achievements in line with standards and expectations.

The time for review meetings will be provided for in the school calendar from the allocated 22 hours of professional time for each full-time teacher each year. One teacher of each subject will be allocated two additional hours by school management to prepare for and coordinate each review meeting. This role will normally be rotated among the relevant teachers.

Each meeting will

- be subject-specific
- be approximately two hours long
- take place at a time as near as possible to the completion of the Classroom-Based Assessment

- involve the review of student work related to a specific Classroom-Based Assessment.

Where there is a single teacher of a subject in a school, the teacher can be facilitated to participate in a Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting in another school. In the case of an Irish-medium school, the single teacher of a subject can participate in a Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting in another Irish-medium school.

Facilitator's guide

Teachers will fulfil the role of facilitator during Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings on a rotational basis. The facilitator will model effective questioning during the discussion of the samples of student work focusing on how well students' work matches the Features of Quality. During review meetings, where it is not clearly evident which descriptor should apply, the group should look for the evidence in the student's work that matches all or nearly all of the Features of Quality associated with a particular descriptor. This 'best fit' approach allows teachers at the review meeting to select the descriptor that 'on-balance' best matches the work being assessed. The facilitator will submit a short report (see Appendix C) of the review meeting to the school principal.

Teachers should not assume that the results of a group of students being assessed will follow any particular distribution plan as the student's work is being judged only against the Features of Quality rather than other students' performance.

Before the meeting

As a first step, teachers may find it helpful to review some of the relevant NCCA-annotated examples prior to coming to decisions about their own students' work.

Once students have completed their Classroom-Based Assessment, the teacher will carry out a provisional assessment of the students' work based on the Features of Quality. These provisional assessments may be modified in light of the discussions that take place at the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting.

The teacher will make a note of the descriptor allocated to each student and any other point they may wish or find useful to refer to during and after the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting. This note will be for the teacher's own use.

In preparation for the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting, each teacher will identify one sample of student's work for each descriptor, where feasible, and will have these available for discussion at the meeting.

During the meeting

The facilitator leads the meeting and keeps the record of the decisions made in a template, which is used to generate the report of the meeting (see Appendix C). It is recommended that the meeting should generally follow this sequence:

- The facilitator explains that the purpose of the meeting is to support consistency of judgement about students' work and to develop a common understanding about the quality of student learning. The value of the meeting in providing feedback to students on how they might improve their work should also be highlighted.
- The facilitator asks one member of staff to introduce a sample of work they have assessed as Yet to reach expectations.
- Following a short introduction by the teacher, the facilitator leads a general discussion on the extent to which the student's work matches the relevant Features of Quality. If the meeting affirms the judgement, this is noted in the meeting record by the facilitator.
- Where there is a lack of agreement, the facilitator should refer to relevant annotated examples of student work provided by the NCCA and, if appropriate, a couple of examples of student work that other teachers in the group have assessed and awarded that descriptor to.
- The facilitator should look to establish consensus during the discussion of examples but the emphasis should be on developing teachers' professional knowledge and skills rather than on seeking unanimous agreement over every Feature of Quality in every example.
- The emphasis in affirming judgements during the review meetings should always be on a 'best fit' approach which allows teachers to agree the descriptor that 'on-balance' is most appropriate for the work being assessed.
- While reasonable time should be allowed for discussion, the facilitator should use his/her professional judgement to decide when it would be appropriate to proceed to the next sample.
- If possible, there should be discussion of at least two samples for each descriptor and the facilitator should ensure that each teacher has at least one of their samples discussed during the meeting.
- The process is repeated, in turn, with samples assessed as In line with expectations, Above expectations and Exceptional being discussed and shared in the group. At the end of the meeting, the facilitator briefly summarises the key points from the discussion.

- It is important that each teacher notes the implications of the decisions made during the meeting for the rest of the student work they have already assessed, particularly in the case of descriptors where their judgement did not align with the view of the majority of teachers at the meeting.

After the meeting

After the meeting, each teacher considers the assessment of their students' work based on the outcomes of the meeting and, where it is considered necessary, makes the appropriate adjustments to their provisional assessments. Following the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting, the facilitator submits their report from the meeting focusing on the outcomes of the discussion of student work at the meeting, and submits it to the school principal.

The facilitator may also ask teachers, should they wish, to contribute some student work to a bank of examples

- to support the induction of new teachers
- to support future Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings
- to use with students and parents in demonstrating the standard of work achieved.

Appendix C: Subject Learning and Assessment Review Meeting:

Facilitator's Report

Subject:	Date/time:
Attendance	
Key decisions taken	
Points of note for future review meetings	
Any further comment?	
Facilitator Date	

