



The following report gives feedback to assist assessors with general issues and trends that have been identified during external moderation of the internally assessed standards in 2025. It also provides further insights from moderation material viewed throughout the year and outlines the Assessor Support available for Music. Please note this report does not introduce new criteria, change the requirements of the standard, or change what we expect from assessment.

Insights

91948: Use music skills in a music style

Performance overview:

To achieve the standard, students need to identify and apply music skills consistent with a music style. In recreating the music style, students must evidence the use of aural skills.

Evidence submitted for moderation has demonstrated individual student development and application of listening, digital music, physical/practical, and theoretical skills through a range of music styles relevant to students' personal musical progress.

Most applied music skills were demonstrated through instrumental playbacks. DAW (Digital Audio Workstation) recreations were also used, along with an increasing number of arrangements, sight-readings, improvisations, transcriptions, and conducting submissions.

Success for students often depended on the music chosen for playback or recreation. For example, when the assessor created or sourced playback tracks for students that they had not heard before and/or could not find readily online, students' listening and musical skills were authentically developed.

It is commendable to see assessors adapting Ministry of Education tasks and designing new ones that engage students and aid in developing individual musical skill sets.

Practices that need strengthening:

As required in the Conditions of Assessment, "students must submit a written or spoken description of the skills they have developed, used, and combined in the project, and the musical and stylistic decisions they have made. A spoken description would be recorded for moderation purposes". Authentic student voice is essential. AI-generated descriptions should be avoided.

Playback evidence

Encourage students to clearly name and unpack the music style they are recreating. For example:

"For this task I learned to play music by ear on the guitar. I identified the piece as rock because of the distorted guitar and repeated licks. The key is B minor, and the intro chords are Bm, Em, F#..."

Students also need to identify the music skills they applied:

"I used listening skills and guitar practical skills to work out the chords a few bars at a time, practising them slowly to hear the pattern. I then learned the main lick by listening for the intervals. It was fast, in keeping with the original rock style."

Students should avoid using YouTube tuition channels to learn their playback music, as this does not meet the intent of the standard.

DAW evidence

Ideally, students will rely on their listening skills rather than internet sites or software that isolates tracks. If they cannot determine the original instrument or sound, they may select the closest timbre and explain their reasoning in their description.

High-quality evidence was often seen when assessors provided custom-created or edited tracks for students to recreate.

Moderation submissions need to include screenshots of each student's DAW tracks alongside their descriptions. These descriptions need sufficient detail for assessors and moderators to understand how the final MP3 was produced. Students should unpack the music style and musical details (key, BPM, form, etc.) as well as production techniques (EQ, reverb, etc.)

91949: Demonstrate music performance skills

Performance overview:

Performances that met the standard demonstrated a balanced combination of technical, musical, and stage presentation skills. Successful performances were typically 2-4 minutes and, in line with Explanatory Note 3, were "intentionally performed" for an audience with a clear beginning, middle, and end.

Approximately 70% of submissions were solo performances, and 30% were group performances (including duets).

It is best practice for students to perform multiple times throughout the year. However, only one performance – either solo or group – may be assessed or submitted for moderation. Because this is a single, high-stakes, 5-credit assessment, it is essential that performers take the time to prepare their performance space and equipment beforehand. This includes having backing tracks ready to play, setting amps to the appropriate levels, ensuring guitar straps are fully secured, adjusting microphone stands for individual singers, and so on.

Practices that need strengthening:

As stage presentation is a key component of the standard, performers must show audience connection from the beginning of the performance to their exit.

For group performances, an open stance, interaction with group members, or an upright seated position supports communication with both the ensemble and audience.

For solo performances, standing to play rock music on guitar and/or bass guitar allows for convincing stage presentation skills to be met.

Students should be provided regular opportunities to practise stagecraft in front of different audiences – from small peer groups to lunchtime concerts. Encourage performers to introduce themselves, the piece/song/waiata, and share brief context about the music or group. At the end of the performance, a simple acknowledgment of the audience completes an intentional presentation.

To support the moderation process, record piano and keyboard players from a side angle to ensure both hands are clearly visible.

91948 and 91949: Digital moderation submissions

Performance overview:

For 91948, digital submissions that aided the moderation process contained:

- Source material for playback evidence, DAW recreations, and arrangements and/or transcriptions.
- Student evidence of individual music skills applied in a music style.
- Student description (written or spoken) of the music style and music skills they have developed.
- Screen shots of DAW tracks (if applicable).
- Teacher marking schedule and feedback to student.

These were provided as a single file per sample in a universal file format, with file names consistent with online grade entries. Checking the resolution of hand-written scores, text, and the clear quality of recordings prior to submission ensured that student evidence was able to be moderated.

For 91949, performance submissions that aided the moderation process contained:

- AV evidence of a single performance, clearly labelled with Learner A, B, C, etc. and grade.
- An AV recording from beginning to end of the performance, i.e. from when the performer announces their music (or is announced) to their acknowledgement of the audience at the completion of the performance.
- Identification of individual performers in a group, which could be on a Word document.
- Teacher marking schedule and feedback to student.

Practices that need strengthening:

Recurring issues arise from:

- Inaccessible links to sites such as SharePoint and Google Docs, where permission settings need to be made public or a username and password provided.
- File formats such as Sibelius that cannot be read on NZQA equipment.

Best practices for documenting and submitting digital work for moderation include:

- File titles should match the Learner A, B, C provided in the Learner Evidence section of the moderation report.
- All evidence (as noted above for 91948) should be combined into a single folder or universal file format for each student.

- AV evidence should be provided in the most common video file formats, such as MP4 or MOV.

To give feedback on this report click on [this link](#).

Assessor Support

NZQA offers free online support for teachers as assessors of NZC achievement standards. These include:

- Exemplars of student work for most standards.
- National Moderator Reports.
- Online learning modules (generic and subject-specific).
- Clarifications for some standards.
- Assessor Practice Tool for many standards.
- Webcasts.

Exemplars, National Moderator Reports, clarifications, and webcasts are hosted on the NZC Subject pages on the NZQA website.

[Subject Pages](#)

Online learning modules and the Assessor Practice Tool are hosted on Pūtake, NZQA's learning management system. You can access these through the Education Sector Logon.

[Log in to Pūtake](#)

We also may provide a speaker to present at national conferences on requests from national subject associations. At the regional or local level, we may be able to provide online support.

Please contact assessorsupport@nzqa.govt.nz for more information or to lodge a request for support.