

Assessment Criteria (Eduqas)

An external examiner gives each piece a mark out of 36 by awarding marks across three criteria up to a maximum of 12 as outlined below. It is important that you understand these criteria so that you can choose pieces that will allow you to get the best possible marks.

Criterion One – Accuracy (out of 12)

To achieve Band 4, the top band, for this criterion (10-12) you must play **accurately** and **fluently at an appropriate tempo** and **follow performance directions** that are notated in the score.

Although you are allowed to embellish melodic lines in a stylistically appropriate way (e.g. in Baroque or Jazz music in particular) the examiner will ultimately be assessing your performance against the score or lead sheet that you have provided.

This criterion is one third of your marks for this component, which is why is so important to play a piece in which you are 100% secure. If you play a more difficult piece in which notes or rhythms are inaccurate or for which you cannot sustain a fluent performance you will be very heavily penalized. Band 2, which is half marks or less (4-6), is described as a performance that is 'sometimes inaccurate in pitch and/or rhythm'.

Graded exams (e.g. ABRSM and Trinity) and music festivals do not place such a heavy emphasis on complete accuracy, so students sometimes find that they do much less well in their A level assessments than they have done on the same piece in an exam or festival.

Criterion Two – Technical Control (out of 12)

To achieve Band 4 for this criterion, you have to sustain a '**sophisticated technique**', your intonation much be **totally secure throughout**, and you need to show a **fully developed tone quality** and projection that is 'used effectively with subtle variations'.

In order to achieve this standard you need to play pieces in which you are in complete technical control, NOT pieces which are at the edge of your ability. You also need to make sure that you choose pieces in which it is possible to show a range of different techniques and tone qualities and which require some subtle variation, otherwise it is very difficult to hit the top band.

Criterion Three – Expression and Interpretation (out of 12)

To achieve Band 4 for this criterion you need to demonstrate a **mature understanding** of the period and style, **communicate sensitively** and show a **sophisticated rapport** with other performers.

In order to achieve this, you will have to work really hard with your teacher to grasp the style of your pieces, listening to performances of them and to performances of other music in the same style, so that you really understand the music that you are playing.

Overall a performance in the top band must be **sophisticated and persuasive** and this will only be possible if you are in full technical control of the pieces that you are playing.