



**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit**  
State Examinations Commission  
**Junior Cycle Final Examination in Music, 2021**  
**Practical Examinations**  
**MEMORANDUM**

**1. Specification requirements**

- a. The practical examination in music will consist of a performance of songs/pieces of the candidate's own choice and one unprepared test.
  - i. **In 2021 only**, candidates will be required to perform **two** musical songs/pieces (see Adjustments in Curriculum due to Covid-19)
  - ii. **In 2022 and onwards**, candidates will be required to perform **three** musical songs/pieces.
- b. The songs/pieces may be presented on a variety of instruments or through a combination of voice and instruments.
- c. Solo and group performing may be freely mixed.
- d. In group performing, the number of performers per part (whether examinable or not) may not exceed two.
- e. When singing to one's own accompaniment, the following may be assessed:
  - i. Singing only
  - ii. Accompaniment only
  - iii. A combination of both.The candidate's choice of voice/instrument/voice + instrument for each song must be indicated clearly on form MP4A.
- f. Duration of examination, including unprepared test: 15 minutes.  
Candidates will not be permitted to exceed the allocated time.

**2. Unprepared tests**

- a) Candidates will choose from (i) aural memory (rhythmic or melodic), (ii) sight-reading (instrumental/vocal/rhythmic) or (iii) improvisation. All tests will be four bars long.
- b) Aural memory tests will be played three times. The candidate responds after the second and third playings. Marks will be awarded for the better attempt.
- c) Candidates who choose the sight-reading option will be given one minute to look over the test. The test may be attempted once only.
- d) Single-stave melodic sight-reading tests will be generic and will not be instrument-specific. Each test will have a high, medium and low register option.
- e) Rhythmic sight-reading tests may be clapped, tapped or played on an untuned percussion instrument.
- f) Candidates who choose improvisation may improvise on a given rhythmic/melodic/harmonic phrase or on a given mood. They will be required to improvise for at least four bars.

**3. Accompaniment**

- a) All candidates may perform with a live accompaniment or with a recording/backing track.
- b) The original recording of a song may not be used as a backing track unless the line being performed by the candidate has been removed from that recording.
- c) All aspects of a performance (e.g. backing track if candidate using headphones) must be audible to the Examiner.
- d) Mobile phones may not be used to play backing tracks. They may not be brought into the examination room by candidates **or** accompanists/teachers under any circumstances.
- e) Backing tracks must be in "hard copy" format (e.g. CD/DVD/tape/USB stick/hard disk of laptop or computer). They may not be downloaded or streamed live from the internet during the examination itself. Ipads/ipods/laptops etc, if used for playing backing tracks, must be in flight mode.

#### 4. Examination Centre & Scheduling

- a) All examinations must start at the time agreed with the examiner.
- b) School authorities are advised not to allocate times to candidates as it is not possible to estimate accurately the time at which any practical examination will take place. Please note that a visit by an Advising Examiner for monitoring purposes will cause a delay. This is unavoidable and is essential for the integrity of the examination.
- c) The entire performance must be completed in the one examination session i.e. during the main scheduled examination period, or, where authorised, on the rescheduled exam date.
- d) Other than for certified medical reasons (form MP7 refers), where a candidate is unable to attend during the assigned examination dates, it will not be possible to reschedule the examination to another date.
- e) As this is a performance examination, care must be taken in the preparation of the examination centre in advance of the examination. **The examination venue *must* be in an area of the school that is free from noise or disturbance by other students/intercom announcements.**
- f) Form MP4A must be completed by candidates in advance and given to the examiner on the day of the performing examination.
- g) **All** candidates are required to attend a group meeting with the Examiner when he/she arrives in the school.
- h) Except in the case of accompanists or a person to operate backing tracks or those involved in group performances, no person other than the candidate(s) under examination will be allowed in the room with the examiner(s). The accompanist/backing-track operator/other performers may not be in the room while the unprepared test is in progress.
- i) In the interest of Health and Safety, the volume of a performance must be kept at an acceptable level.
- j) The Examiner is precluded from discussing any aspect of the examination with any party. Any queries in relation to the examination must be addressed directly to the State Examinations Commission.

#### 5. General information

- a) Candidates and Teachers are advised that sample papers, unprepared tests and other relevant information can be viewed, downloaded and printed from the State Examinations Commission's website [www.examinations.ie](http://www.examinations.ie).
- b) Any issues in relation to the performing examinations in Music should be addressed to:
  - Practicals Section (Music)
  - State Examinations Commission
  - Cornamaddy
  - Athlone
  - Co Westmeath

**Telephone:** 090-644 2751 / 090-644 2752

**e-mail:** [practicals@examinations.ie](mailto:practicals@examinations.ie)