

RIAM Performance Grade Exams

Marking Guidelines

The following document offers a general overview of the marking criteria. Details of technique relevant to specific instruments will form part of the assessment. From Grade VI to Senior Certificate, a higher level of technical facility, stylistic awareness and music understanding will be expected.

Precision

The following are some of the key areas that will be of primary focus:

- Accuracy of notes
- Accuracy of rhythmic detail
- Tempo choice and ability to keep a steady flow throughout (as appropriate to the music)
- Candidate's ability to recover from stumbles and maintain continuity

Maximum: 30 marks

28–30: Distinction

Precise and polished playing; precise rhythmic shape; carefully considered and accurately delivered; excellent attention to detail, confidently executed.

25–27: Honours

A very well prepared and largely accurate delivery; minor slips were well masked and did not take away from the overall effect; rhythmic detail was carefully observed; all content has been closely studied.

22–24: Merit

Generally secure and mostly confident in delivery; occasional note/rhythmic inaccuracies were a distraction at times though a good level of preparation is evident overall.

18–21: Pass

A reasonably accurate delivery, with a sprinkling of misread notes throughout; some of the rhythmic detail was approximate and needed closer study.

14–17:

The 'bones' of the notes are there, but greater security is needed to demonstrate a confident and accurate performance.

10–13:

Generally, this was very uncertain; greater familiarity with the basic notes and note values needed to ensure accurate delivery.

Musicality

The following are some of the key areas that will be of prime focus:

- Candidate's ability to understand and convey the mood/character of each piece
- Candidate's ability to understand stylistic detail and demonstrate this accordingly
- Attention to articulation/dynamics/phrasing detail, as appropriate
- Ability to combine the above elements to create a musical performance

Maximum: 30 marks

28–30: Distinction

An expressive performance with beautiful phrasing and tonal colouring; excellent stylistic awareness and attention to the finer detail; sensitive playing and beautiful tone; mood and character of each piece has been effectively conveyed.

25–27: Honours

The musical aspects of the performance were well thought out and delivered; very good sensitivity to the balance between melody and accompaniment; lovely dynamic detail and shaping of phrases; good variety of style and character demonstrated.

22–24: Merit

Some effective shape and colour, though this can be further explored in general; mostly good singing quality, but the balance between melody and accompaniment was a little misjudged in places; good effort to bring out the character of each piece; some stylistic qualities were evident.

18–21: Pass

An effort was made to show some dynamic detail, though this was quite limited; the shaping of phrases has yet to be considered and would help to embellish the overall effect; aim to listen more to the balance of melody/accompaniment, to ensure that the melodic line projects; greater variety of mood and character would enhance your presentation.

14–17:

The musical detail has yet to be considered, as you are still grappling with the technical aspects; some good tone was demonstrated in places, but this needs greater consistency throughout the performance.

10–13:

Musical elements were absent here, as you often struggled to find the notes and keep any sense of continuity going.

Technical Ability

The following are some of the key areas that will be of prime focus:

- Appropriate posture
- Coordination
- Control of tone and evenness of sound
- Demonstration of a range of tonal colour
- Clarity and control of fast passages of music
- Ability to sustain long phrases

(30 marks)

28–30: Distinction

A confident technical command; excellent control of tone and range of tonal colour; clarity and drive in faster passages added rhythmic energy of the music; excellent clarity and attention to articulation detail.

25–27: Honours

This was technically very secure; faster passages were well negotiated very good clarity overall; good tone developing with a pleasing range of tonal colour; tempo mostly well maintained with good attention to rhythmic detail on the whole; articulation detail was carefully considered and mainly consistent.

22–24: Merit

A very good grasp of the technical demands, though a little untidy in some of the faster passages; sluggish in places, resulting in some slowing of tempo; tone developing well, more contrast needed

to demonstrate a wider range of sound; good overall awareness of the rhythmic shape, though some passages needed greater definition; tempi were well judged but not always maintained.

18–21:

A good effort to maintain a steady pace, though tempo choices were a little cautious in some cases; faster passages need a little more care and control; a number of slips and bumps in the quicker sections, which resulted in some inconsistency of pulse.

14–17:

Good tone at the start, but this was fairly inconsistent as you continued; a sense of forward motion was not always managed, due to a good number of gaps and mishaps; the pulse was generally unsettled, and rhythmic content suffered as a result; coordination was an issue in a number of places and needs greater care.

10–13:

From the outset, this programme was marred by frequent stumbles and gaps as you searched for the notes; an attempt was made to keep going, but you were unable to sustain any real sense of continuity as the fundamentals were not yet familiar enough to you.

Overall Presentation (10 marks)

- 9–10: Excellent sense of performance, attractive programme choice, which was extremely well-rounded. A committed performance with excellent stylistic awareness, minor slips did not detract from this convincing performance musically expressive.
- 7–8: A well-rounded performance, a few missing elements in an otherwise fluid presentation. A nicely balanced programme with some expressive qualities, and overall, good observation of detail.
- 5–6: A broadly accurate delivery, though a number of aspects lacked security and the finer detail was not always evident in this performance. A nice selection of pieces, but greater accuracy and fluency would allow you to explore more of the stylistic and expressive aspects of this programme.
- 3–4: There was a general feel of uncertainty here, with frequent gaps and hesitations. Too much insecurity for you to consider the musical aspects of the pieces. The fundamentals need much greater care, more groundwork is necessary.
- 2: A very flawed attempt.