

MARKING CRITERIA

MPHIL

MARKING SCHEME

The passmark is 60%. For the degree to be awarded a candidate must achieve a mark of 60% or higher in each of the parts of the examination, subject to the conditions outlined below. Candidates whose marks are below the passmark or borderline will be invited to a viva voce examination, which will normally be held in late September.

Failure in individual components of the degree

Any coursework submission (essay, exercise, portfolio of compositions or other component) which is awarded a mark below 60 may be reworked and resubmitted ONCE only. If the resubmission is awarded a mark of 56 or lower, it will be deemed to have failed; if the mark falls between 57 and 59, it will be deemed a 'marginal' fail. Such a mark may be compensated for by a mark of 65 or above in the thesis or equivalent paper. No more than one marginal fail may be compensated in this way.

An oral examination may be held in cases in which a candidate receives one marginal fail in his/her coursework submission, and in all cases where the thesis or equivalent is awarded a mark below 60. Candidates with two or more coursework components that receive a mark of 56 or lower after resubmission will not normally be permitted to proceed further with the examination.

The Board of Graduate Studies has a strict policy in relation to plagiarism. Plagiarism means passing off other people's ideas or words as if they were your own, and you must take care to avoid it, essentially by understanding and following referencing techniques and other academic conventions. It is essential that you read carefully the University's policy on plagiarism, which can be found online at: www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/plagiarism/.

ASSESSMENT OF COURSEWORK ESSAYS AND THESES

85 and above (High Distinction)

As for 75-84 below, but with the following additional qualities: the thesis shows flair, and is outstandingly original and/or makes an outstanding contribution to its area of study. It is likely to be publishable.

75 - 84 (Distinction)

- TOPIC:

The writer has conceptualised the topic and situated it within a larger historical and/or cultural and/or critical context, as appropriate—a context which should be presented only to the extent required to understand the thesis's contribution. The state of knowledge of the topic is clearly set out, and the inquiry is related to it, without merely paraphrasing the ideas of others. Relevant primary and secondary

sources have been identified and studied, possibly using special skills (such as linguistic, musico-analytical or palaeographical skills).

- **ARGUMENT:**
The thesis makes a significant contribution to understanding of the field. The writer is able to display good understanding of the material studied as well as make a useful synthesis of those findings. The narrative will serve an overall argument stated clearly in the introduction and conclusion and developed in a systematic way in the course of the thesis. Work in this range will be aware of its limitations and of which questions cannot be answered.
- **PRESENTATION:**
The writing should be lucid and persuasive. The presentation will be immaculate with appropriate and well-used reference systems, organised to the best convenience of the reader. Musical examples will be clear and appropriately presented.

68-74: (High Pass)

Work within this range of marks may show many of the qualities of a thesis meriting a distinction, but in less sustained form. It will display a high level of competence.

- **TOPIC**
This will have been chosen carefully, although in some cases it may be a little narrow and constitute a useful illustration of the familiar. The subject will be situated in an appropriate context and there will be a good understanding of the state of knowledge and debate, but in both areas there may be some unnecessary background material or recapitulation of established views.
- **ARGUMENT**
Sources may have been examined with great industry, but there may be gaps in the material which should have been handled in relation to the topic (and as appropriate in the timescale). There may be a tendency to reproduce, or to paraphrase, rather than to analyse. There will be a suitable framework (chronological, cultural, critical) but perhaps a preference for narrative over analysis and a tendency to get lost in detail which may be presented as an end in itself.
- **PRESENTATION**
The writing should be clear, but may either overcomplicate ideas or present them in too straightforward a fashion. Presentation of reference material will be acceptable. Musical examples will normally be clear and appropriately presented.

60-67: (Pass)

Work within this range of marks will make a solid and worthwhile contribution to its area of study, but with some limitations.

- **TOPIC**
This will be a plausible subject for exploration, with scope for an interesting approach, although it may tend towards some restatement of existing arguments. The topic will demonstrate some awareness of the current state of knowledge and debate but the relationship between this context and the specific area of research may be insufficiently elaborated.
- **ARGUMENT**

The writer may survey the topic satisfactorily but will largely avoid analysis or will only demonstrate a limited ability to integrate narrative and analysis within the argument. There may, for instance, be a largely narrative core with only brief introductory and concluding statements/hypotheses. There may also be some failures of understanding or neglect of difficulties in the argument. Sources may be identified and summarised but insufficiently investigated. The framework of the argument will be coherent but the argument itself may at times tend to drift outside this frame or only to explore certain aspects in sufficient detail, leaving other issues less well covered.

- **PRESENTATION**

The writing will be generally clear but possibly colourless, repetitious or verbose. Presentation of reference material will be coherent, although there may be inconsistencies and possible flaws in assessment of amount (too much, too little).

59 and below (Fail)

Theses which fail to achieve a pass mark will usually display all the weaknesses of those at the bottom of the pass mark range, generally in more pronounced and sustained form. Some theses will have a major flaw which prevents a higher mark.

- **TOPIC:**

The approach to the topic may be too ambitious given the space available or so predictable that there is little scope for an interesting contribution. The sources may not have been studied with adequate time and attention so that much space is filled with background.

- **ARGUMENT:**

The writer may be unable to show the relation between primary research and a wider historical/cultural and/or critical background. Several of the following features may be present. The wider context may be sketched vaguely and then forgotten while the writer plunges into detail. Treatment of sources and questions may show failures of understanding or lack of curiosity. Source material may be quoted or paraphrased at length and may relate to the subject in a variety of unconnected ways. Alternatively it may be summarized without discrimination. In either case the thesis will fail to answer a clearly formulated question. Any overall argument will at best be stated at the beginning and end, or possibly left to the reader to divine. Large issues may go unexplored and specific claims left unsubstantiated.

- **PRESENTATION:**

The style may be unclear, repetitious and ungainly. Factual errors and obvious gaps in knowledge are likely. In other cases presentation may be careful and even pedantic but the use of reference systems may be poor and unstandardised, with an ill-organised and/or incomplete bibliography, discography or other compilation of references.

ASSESSMENT OF COMPOSITIONS

High Distinction (85 and above)

Portfolios in this category will exhibit all the qualities listed below for Distinction, but to an exceptional degree. The pieces will clearly be of a highly professional and artistic stature. Presentation will be immaculate

Distinction (75-84)

In this mark band pieces will demonstrate the emergence of a fully articulated artistic vision, personality and stylistic flair in all aspects of their execution. They will realise an imaginative and substantial idea with complete technical assurance and focus. There will be evidence of serious thought and imagination in every aspect of the style and form, and attention to expressive detail. The writing for instruments and for voices will be thoroughly idiomatic. Vocal settings will demonstrate an imaginative and effective response to the text and a convincing musical design. Presentation will normally be immaculate.

High Pass (68-74)

These portfolios will exhibit all the qualities listed below for Pass, but to an even higher and more consistent standard. There may be a degree of unevenness in execution (for example some portfolios may demonstrate flair and ambition on a technical level which is not quite matched by an equivalent standard of presentation; others may be immaculately realised but less imaginative in scope). All pieces will demonstrate an awareness of their cultural and historical context. Presentation will be of an extremely high standard.

Pass (60-7)

In this mark band it is normally expected that most of the pieces will demonstrate a serious attempt to realise an imaginative and substantial idea with a high level of technical assurance and focus. Most of the pieces will show evidence of imagination in matters of style and form. The writing for instruments and for voices will be thoroughly idiomatic. Vocal settings will demonstrate an effective response to the text and a convincing musical design. Most of the pieces will demonstrate an awareness of their cultural and historical context. Presentation will be of a good standard though there may be some minor deficiencies.

Fail (0-59)

These portfolios will show serious limitations of technique and imagination, and may reveal weaknesses of harmony, rhythm, scoring or other aspects, even if they fulfil the basic criteria set for the examination. Presentation may be poor.

NB: Work should be deemed 'of equivalent standard to a distinction' if the four compositions average a mark of 75 or above and the essay mark is not below 68.

ASSESSMENT OF RECITALS

High Distinction (85 and above)

Performances in this mark band demonstrate all the qualities found at distinction level, but to a very considerable degree. Outstanding performances are marked by

interpretative maturity, nuanced artistry and technical command. The presentation is also of an exceptional standard.

Distinction (75-84)

Performances in this mark band demonstrate a very high level of technical achievement which always serves the goal of musical communication. There is usually an excellent sense of structure, a high degree of refinement in expressive detail, a pronounced awareness of what is stylistically appropriate, and a strong feeling of engagement through a well-presented performance.

High Pass (68-74)

In this mark band a high level of technical competence and presentation is expected, and it is deployed in the service of appropriate expressive ideals. Performers may show exceptional technical ability, but lack a corresponding degree of musicality; alternatively, they may have a very good sense of musical awareness, but lack the technical refinement needed to communicate their ideas effectively. The presentation is accomplished.

Pass (60-67)

Performances in this mark band show a good degree of technical control and presentation. They also display consistent musical understanding, and the artistic intentions are clear if not consistently realised. The performance is competent if not always or sufficiently imaginative.

High Fail (50-59)

Performances in this mark band are technically insecure, and managing the instrument usually takes precedence over the projection of musicality, which may in itself be limited. The playing may be only intermittently communicative and imaginative, and the presentation deficient in one or more respects.

Fail (40-49)

The performer may show some degree of control, but the overall impression is one of untidiness and both technical and musical insecurity. There is little sense of structural awareness or of expressive intent. The presentation is unsatisfactory.

Low Fail (0-39)

Performances in this mark band are consistently poor, marked by technical deficiencies and/or a lack of musical understanding so marked that there is little sense of music-making. The performance is uncommunicative with very low standards of presentation.

MMus

Marking scheme

The passmark in each of the four examined components of the course (Choral conducting, Coursework essays, Choral recital, Optional element) is 60%. Candidates need to pass (60%) each component (the mark for the Coursework essays being the average of the marks awarded for the two submissions) in order to gain the degree. The

weighting of the final overall mark will be calculated as 25% for each of the four components. Candidates whose marks are below the passmark or borderline will be invited to a viva voce examination in late July.

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BOTH PATHWAYS

Assessment of Coursework and Extended Essays

Distinction (75 and above)

Work that is outstanding both in the range and command of the material, and in the argument and analysis it brings to bear. The examiner will expect a high level of originality, although originality alone may not guarantee marks in this range. The essay will normally have an extremely well-defined scope and purpose, and will achieve its aims clearly and with conviction. Presentation (including that of the bibliography) must be of a very high standard.

High Pass (68-74)

Work that is excellent both in the range and command of the material, and in the argument and analysis it brings to bear. The examiner will expect originality, although originality alone may not guarantee marks in this range. The essay will often, but not consistently, display evidence of high intelligence, and in general be sophisticated in analysis and impressive in its display of relevant knowledge. The essay will normally have a well-defined scope and purpose, and will achieve its aims clearly and with conviction. Presentation (including that of the bibliography) will normally be of a very high standard.

Pass (60-67)

Work showing evidence of a good and broad-based engagement with and understanding of the material, and organised in a clearly argued, well illustrated fashion. An essay at the top end of this range band will usually, but not consistently, be sophisticated in analysis, and impressive in its display of relevant knowledge, with good presentation (including that of the bibliography). Essays at the lower end of this range may exhibit an imbalance between exposition and synthesis, but will nevertheless show a clear understanding of the state of knowledge and debate concerning the topic. Although the prose style may leave room for improvement, the presentation (including that of the bibliography) will be satisfactory.

Fail (0-59)

Work that is lacking in focus, organisation, breadth of reference and control of the material. Essays in this range may show evidence of poor judgement, or may contain sections that are loosely related to the main argument. Presentation (including that of the bibliography) will be deficient. An essay in this class may have failed adequately to

formulate a viable project, may not have grasped essential aspects of the argument, or may be marred by factual errors.

Assessment of Editing Project

Distinction (75 and above)

The project will display the highest level of musical and historical understanding. Levels of presentation will be excellent throughout. In an edition, all relevant aspects of the source or sources will have been fully considered, and informed decisions made concerning problems with multiple sources; the introduction will be both informative and relevant to the music chosen; the edition itself will be accurate and show a coherent and historically informed editorial policy, and the critical apparatus will be presented in a clear and consistent manner. In a comparative study, all relevant aspects of the source or sources will have been fully considered, and the editorial methods of the chosen editions will be fully explained and analysed, showing the highest levels of historical awareness where appropriate. In a study of editorial practice, the chosen topic will be examined thoroughly from all relevant theoretical, historical and practical angles, and the study will show an outstanding grasp of the scholarly literature on the topic.

High Pass (68-74)

The project will display a high level of musical and historical understanding. Levels of presentation will be high throughout. In an edition, relevant aspects of the source or sources will have been explored, and informed decisions made concerning problems with multiple sources; the introduction will be both informative and relevant to the music chosen; the edition itself will be accurate and show a coherent and historically informed editorial policy, and the critical apparatus will be presented in a clear and consistent manner. In a comparative study, most relevant aspects of the source or sources will have been considered, and the editorial methods of the chosen editions will be explained and analysed, showing a high level of historical awareness where appropriate. In a study of editorial practice, the chosen topic will be examined from all relevant theoretical, historical and practical angles, and the study will show a good understanding of the scholarly literature on the topic.

Pass (60-67)

The project will display a satisfactory level of musical and historical understanding. Levels of presentation will be adequate throughout. In an edition, relevant aspects of the source or sources will have been explored, and informed decisions made concerning problems with multiple sources, but the candidate may not have successfully negotiated all the problems involved with these issues; the introduction will be both informative and relevant to the music chosen though some pertinent lines of inquiry may have been left unexplored; the edition itself will be mostly accurate and show a generally coherent and historically informed editorial policy, and the critical apparatus will be presented in a clear and consistent manner though it may contain errors. In a comparative study, many of the relevant aspects of the source or sources will have been considered, and the editorial methods of the chosen editions will be explained and analysed showing a satisfactory level of historical awareness where appropriate. In a study of editorial practice, the

chosen topic will be studied from a variety of relevant theoretical, historical and practical angles; some areas may be left under-explored, though the study will have an adequate grounding in the scholarly literature on the topic.

Fail (0-59)

Failure will result if any element contains major errors or serious historical misunderstandings, or is largely incomplete. The presentation is likely to be poor. In an editing project, many aspects of the source or sources may have been left unexplored, and unwise decisions made concerning problems with multiple sources; the introduction may be largely irrelevant or poorly written; the edition itself will contain many errors and display an ill-considered editorial policy, and the critical apparatus will be inaccurate or inconsistent in detail. In a comparative study, many aspects of the source or sources will not have been considered, and the editorial methods of the chosen editions will not be adequately explained and analysed, revealing an unsatisfactory level of historical awareness. In a study of editorial practice, the chosen topic will not be studied in sufficient depth, and the study will be largely isolated from the scholarly literature on the topic.

Assessment of Organ Recital

Distinction (75 and above)

Performances in this mark band will demonstrate all the qualities found at high-pass level, but to a considerable degree. Outstanding performances will be marked by interpretative maturity, nuanced artistry and technical command.

High Pass (68-74)

Performances in this range demonstrate a very high level of technical achievement which always serves the goal of musical communication. There is usually a good sense of structure, a high degree of refinement in expressive detail, a pronounced awareness of what is stylistically appropriate, and a strong feeling of engagement.

Pass (60-67)

In this range an adequate level of technical mastery is expected, and it is deployed in the service of appropriate expressive ideals. Performers may show considerable technical ability, but lack musicality; alternatively, they may have a very good sense of musical awareness, but lack the technical refinement needed to communicate their ideas effectively. Performances will for the most part be stylistically coherent and demonstrate good structural shaping.

Fail (0-59)

Performances may be technically insecure, or marred by a lack of a sense of coherent style, structure or expressive intent.

Assessment of Arrangement Project

To follow.

CONDUCTING PATHWAY

Assessment of Choral Conducting Examination

Distinction (75 and above)

In this mark band the conductor will show excellence in both the rehearsal and performance of the set works, bringing about a performance of exceptional communicative power and finesse in terms of ensemble, blend, tuning and diction. S/he will markedly improve the choral singing both through the use of spoken word and gesture, maintaining an appropriate style of conducting throughout. The interpretation of the set works will demonstrate high levels of both integrity and persuasiveness. The rehearsal manner will be such that the singers clearly respond with enthusiasm to the guidance being given.

High Pass (68-74)

In this mark band the conductor will maintain a high standard in both the rehearsal and performance of the set works, bringing about a performance of notable communicative power and finesse in terms of ensemble, blend, tuning and diction. S/he will improve the choral singing both through the use of spoken word and gesture, maintaining a style of conducting not markedly out of place with the style of music being performed. The interpretation of the set works will demonstrate both integrity and persuasiveness. The rehearsal manner will be such that the singers respond well to the guidance being given.

Pass (60-67)

In this mark band the conductor will maintain a satisfactory standard in both the rehearsal and performance of the set works, bringing about a performance that for the most part bears a good level of communicative power and finesse in terms of ensemble, blend, tuning and diction. S/he will improve the choral singing both through the use of spoken word and gesture, maintaining a style of conducting not markedly out of place with the style of music being performed. The interpretation of the chosen works will for the most part be satisfactory, if not wholly convincing. The rehearsal manner will be such that the singers clearly respond to the guidance being given.

Fail (0-59)

In this mark band the conductor will show weakness in both the rehearsal and performance of the set works. Little improvement will be made to the quality of performance from the singers, and the interpretations may be inconsistent and arbitrary in nature. The conductor's movements may be ineffective or irrelevant. The rehearsal manner will not encourage the singers to give of their best.

Assessment of Choral Recital

Distinction (75 and above)

The candidate will present a programme which is original, engaging and reflects his/her own scholarly research. As a conductor, s/he will produce a performance of exceptional communicative power and finesse, brought about through the highest levels of interpretative awareness, and an acute attention to technical issues such as ensemble, blend, tuning and diction. S/he will show the highest levels of ability in directing the performances through clear and technically flawless gestures, and by engaging the singers fully in the performance. The performances will be coherent and appropriate to the nature of the music being performed. Where accompanists are involved, the conductor will show an excellent awareness of the way in which the voices and accompaniment both contribute to a good performance.

High Pass (68-74)

The candidate will present a programme which is original, engaging and reflects his/her own scholarly research. As a conductor, s/he will produce a performance of high communicative power and finesse, brought about through an excellent level of interpretative awareness, and a close attention to technical issues such as ensemble, blend, tuning and diction. S/he will show a high level of ability in directing the performances through clear and technically secure gestures, and by engaging the singers fully in the performance. The performances will be coherent and appropriate to the nature of the music being performed. Where accompanists are involved, the conductor will show a good awareness of the way in which the voices and accompaniment both contribute to a good performance.

Pass (60-67)

The candidate will present a programme which has elements of originality, but which does not display any clear evidence of his/her own scholarly research. As a conductor, s/he will produce a performance of satisfactory communicative power and finesse, brought about through an adequate level of interpretative awareness, and attention to technical issues such as ensemble, blend, tuning and diction. S/he will show a satisfactory level of ability in directing the performances through clear and technically secure gestures, though some problems may be evident; for example, the singers may sometimes find it difficult to follow leads, or may not always be fully engaged in the performance. The performances will be mostly coherent and appropriate to the nature of the music being performed, though some inconsistency and lack of judgement may be evident. Where accompanists are involved, the conductor will show an adequate awareness of the way in which the voices and accompaniment both contribute to a good performance.

Fail (0-59)

The candidate will present a programme which lacks originality, and displays no evidence of his/her own scholarly research. As a conductor, s/he will fail to produce a satisfactory performance of the chosen programme. There is likely to be little attention to details such as ensemble, blend, tuning and diction, and there will be little grasp of the interpretative issues involved. S/he will show deficiencies in technical control, and is likely

to demonstrate little sense of interaction with the singers. The performances will be inconsistent and may reveal misunderstandings of the nature of the chosen repertoire. Where accompanists are involved, the conductor may show little interest in the way the choir and accompanist work together.

Assessment of Continuo Performance

Distinction (75 and above)

Performances will demonstrate great confidence in the realisation of the harmonies; it is assumed that they will also show a high level of technical command over the instruments used. Successful candidates should be able to find idiomatic solutions to all the interpretative problems posed by the figuring, and they should demonstrate a strong awareness of what is stylistically appropriate for each of the set works. They should also be able to engage convincingly with the performers provided by the examiners. The performances as a whole should be of a standard that one might expect at a professional concert.

High Pass (68-74)

Candidates will be expected to maintain a high standard, though there may be occasional lapses. Many Distinction-level qualities will be in evidence, but performances may fall down on one or more account. For example, they may be technically secure but lack imagination; alternatively, stylish realisations may be compromised by technical errors. Candidates should be able to engage well with the performers provided by the examiners, and should demonstrate a good awareness of what is stylistically appropriate for each of the set works.

Pass (60-67)

Candidates will be expected to maintain a good standard overall; however, there may be repeated lapses. Performances are likely to be erratic, while demonstrating a basic level of competence and some stylistic awareness in their handling of the figuring. Candidates may find it difficult to engage fully with the performers provided by the examiners, and their awareness of what is stylistically appropriate may be limited.

Fail (0-59)

Performances are likely to be technically insecure, and coping with the figuring is likely to take precedence over the projection of musicality. Candidates may show some degree of control, but the overall impression will be one of untidiness. There will be little sense of stylistic awareness, and candidates will be likely to pay little attention to the performers provided by the examiners.

VOCAL PATHWAY

Assessment of Solo Recital

To follow.

Assessment of Ensemble Performance

To follow.

Assessment of Directing from the Keyboard

To follow.