

## Calibration Toolkit for Musical Recitals: Programme

This detailed programme provides the facilitator with all the information and instructions needed to run a calibration event. The event comprises two parts – an online marking exercise followed by a one-day workshop.

PowerPoint slides are provided to help the facilitator work through the day.

The timings below assume a 10.00 am to 4.00 pm workshop, which can be adjusted to different start and finish times.

### Stage 1: Online marking exercise

Two weeks before the workshop, each delegate is invited to listen to four final-year recitals and decide their grade based on the delegate's sense of appropriate academic standards for this stage of study. They are asked to consider the performance in relation to two aspects of quality (from the Subject Benchmark Statement for Music).

- Presentation: the ability to use a range of techniques to enable effective communication of musical intentions clearly to others (performers, audiences).
- Interpretation: the artistic, technical, aesthetic and expressive skills necessary to communicate music convincingly to a listener.

They are provided with contextual material for the assignments, such as the module learning outcomes and the assignment brief (see Appendix 1).

Delegates enter their marks and comments online without sight of other people's judgements. The final date for entering marks and comments should be three or four days before the workshop to allow the facilitator time to combine the results and incorporate them into the PowerPoint slides.

Delegates are also invited to comment on the extent to which the assessment method enables the students to demonstrate the desired learning – is it fit for purpose? Note that this may be a more-or-less relevant consideration depending on what is being calibrated (e.g. a multiple-choice test may not be the most effective test of students' ability to communicate).

Ask delegates to bring copies of their marks and comments with them.

Ask delegates to bring completed research questionnaires (see appendix 3).

## Technology guidance

To collect the blind marks prior to the workshop, the facilitator could consider the following options, asking people to 'Please enter your individual mark for performance 1' etc.

1. Ask delegates to email their marks and paste these into an Excel spreadsheet.
2. Collect marks in a form of online survey software, for example:
  - Survey Monkey ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com))
  - Google Forms (<https://docs.google.com/forms/u/0/>)
  - Microsoft Office Forms (<https://forms.office.com>). All institutions that use Office 365 have access to Forms free of charge. This is the option that was used for the original calibration event, and we would recommend it.

If the facilitator uses online survey software he/she will have the option to export the results to a CSV file in Excel (or with Option 1 above he/she can hard type these into Excel). Once the data are in Excel he/she can then create graphs to show at the workshop, providing an overview of the marks people gave. He/she can analyse the data using pivot tables and automate this using macros, so that the data is formatted in the way he/she would like to present it.

In Appendix 2 he/she will find VBA code for a macro which will automatically analyse the marks in groups of 5% (0–5%, 6–10% etc.) and display these in a simple clear graph. He/she will probably need learning technology assistance to use this.

## Between Stage 1 and the workshop

The facilitator will almost certainly need to send out a reminder to delegates to ensure they complete the online marking. The message should make clear that participation in the workshop is dependent on having completed the marking in advance.

The facilitator should combine the marks as indicated in the notes on the relevant PowerPoint slides.

## Workshop

*Have these items available.*

- The PowerPoint slides

- Flip chart, white board or multi-media projector for sharing feedback from the groups
- Flip chart paper and pens
- Laptop
- Evaluation questionnaires, one per delegate

## 10.00 Introduction

Use PowerPoint slides to:

- Welcome delegates
- Provide any housekeeping matters (fire alarms, location of toilets, refreshments etc.)
- Explain:
  - the programme for the day
  - the rationale for the event [[Why Calibration?](#)]
  - the aim of the event
  - the small group stage

## 10.30 Stage 2: Small group

1. Place the delegates in groups of four or five, mixing up people from different institutions and instruments where possible.
2. The facilitator should choose three of the four recitals to discuss, based on where there is most disagreement in the online grades.
3. The delegates are shown their range of marks for the first selected recital. They are asked to discuss the marking, sharing their individual grades and comments as they wish.
4. Each group attempts to come to a consensus regarding whether the recital meets the threshold learning outcomes and the grade it should be awarded.
5. Reference material, such as the Subject Benchmark Statement and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) is available to support discussion.
6. Groups note which characteristics of the recital were most influential in making their decision about the grade – for example, which characteristics influenced the decision to place the work above or below a key borderline such as pass/fail or 2.2/2.1?
7. Marks and comments are recorded for using in the whole group discussion.

## **Technology guidance**

To collect the group marks and comments, the facilitator could use the template provided in the Toolkit. We recommend that he/she provide each group with a laptop which has this template open. We would also recommend that this template is saved in software that automatically saves the document and allows it to be accessed over the internet. The benefit of this is that, as or after groups type their marks and comments, the facilitator can display their completed template on the screen at the front of the room.

Possible software to save the documents in include:

- Google Documents (<https://www.google.co.uk/docs/about/>).
- Microsoft Office 365 Word (<https://office.live.com/start/Word>). All institutions that use Office 365 have access to Office 365 Word free of charge. This is the option that was used for the original calibration event, and we would recommend it.

## **11.00 Stage 3: Whole group**

The small group grades are displayed along with a set of agreed grades compiled by a group of 24 music assessors through a similar exercise.

Where there is variation, the facilitator encourages the small groups whose grades are most different to make the case for their grade, drawing on the influential characteristics they noted. Other groups are welcome to add comments to the discussion. The aim is to try and reconcile differences and achieve a level of agreement on both grades and influential characteristics. They do not necessarily need to agree the same marks as the agreed grades, although these might be taken into account particularly where there is a problem in reaching a consensus.

Where there is no variation in grades, the discussion focuses on influential characteristics and gaining consensus on what most contributed to the grade awarded.

Where consensus cannot be achieved, it is important to point out the consequences for standards and students in terms of fairness and the comparability of awards. Discuss how the variation might be tackled, perhaps by greater adherence to national reference points and the agreed grades.

## **11.30 break**

## **11.45**

Stages 2 and 3 are repeated for the second selected recital.

## 12.45 lunch

### 13.30 Influential characteristics

Change small groups to mix up delegates across the groups. The table below shows how morning groups can be reconfigured in the afternoon to bring together representatives from all the different groups.

Morning groups	Afternoon groups
Group 1: 1,1,1,1,1	Group 1: 1,2,3,4
Group 2: 2,2,2,2,2	Group 2: 1,2,3,4
Group 3: 3,3,3,3,3	Group 3: 1,2,3,4
Group 4: 4,4,4,4,4	Group 4: 1,2,3,4
	Group 5: 1,2,3,4

Ask each group to reflect on the influential characteristics put forward during the morning, including those given with the *Agreed Grades*. Their task is to write a definitive list of influential characteristics arising from this calibration exercise, particularly focusing on those characteristics that influence judgements at the borderlines of important grades, such as pass/fail, 2.1/2.2 or 2.1/1.

Groups should try to ensure that they share an understanding of the characteristics on their list by highlighting aspects of the recitals which illustrate the characteristic, where this is possible.

Ask them to write their list on a flip chart.

### 13.50

In each group, one person (list owner) stays with their list and the others distribute themselves across the rest of the group tables. On each table, the list owner explains and takes questions on their list of influential characteristics. The emphasis should be on building a shared understanding of what the characteristics mean in the context of actual student work.

### 14.00

Group members return to their own group to discuss their findings from visitors and from visiting with other groups. The lists should be finalised and posted on the wall.

### 14.10

The facilitator explains the reasoning for the last exercise in terms of building a shared understanding of standards that might be used across staff, programmes and institutions to create common assessment criteria. The

facilitator attempts to draw on the commonalities in the lists as the characteristics that we should concentrate on in building assessment criteria as there is 'across the board' agreement.

The facilitator should stress that, on their own, such common assessment criteria are unlikely to have a significant impact on assuring common standards unless they are illustrated through exemplars, and assessors have this kind of calibration opportunity to discuss their meaning.

## 14.15

Stages 2 and 3 are repeated for Recital 3 (the cello), but the facilitator actively encourages the groups to draw on their lists of influential characteristics, particularly common ones, in making their decision about the appropriate grade.

As the assignment is likely to be of a different standard than the first two, other influential characteristics may arise.

## 15.15 Conclusion

1. Note that the process has confirmed the challenge of agreeing grades across multiple markers [[link to Jane Ginsborg video](#)].
2. Encourage the delegates to consider what they can take from the day in terms of their own standards and that of their home institution and where they serve as external examiners.
3. Encourage the delegates to use the toolkit in other forums, such as their department or an examining department.
4. Explain that this calibration process can be repeated across many types of assignment with different learning outcomes in Music, such as composition and music scholarship, criticism and theory, and music technology (he/she may wish to consult the Subject Benchmark Statement for Music: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/SBS-Music-16.pdf>).
5. Ask them to complete an evaluation questionnaire (see appendix 3).

## After the workshop

Share a summary of the evaluation questionnaire with Advance HE to contribute to the evidence base for calibration. Send the summary to: [external.examining@advance-he.ac.uk](mailto:external.examining@advance-he.ac.uk)

# Appendix 1 – Principal Study 4: Final Performance or Final Portfolio

## Module outcomes

On successful completion of the module, students should be able to:

- demonstrate a sophisticated technical and expressive command in the principal study discipline in a broad and well-suited range of repertoires and styles, sufficient to enable progression to postgraduate study or professional life (PLO A1, A2, A3, B1, C2)
- discriminate between their own developing originality and other artists' ideas, in order to integrate these meaningfully into persuasive and authoritative performances or compositions (PLO A1, A2, B1, B2, C2)
- demonstrate the symbiotic relationship between their practical and theoretical musical training and education, in order to resolve complex matters of stylistic interpretation (PLO A1, A2, A7, B1, B4, B5, C2)
- demonstrate a professional level of presentation (PLO B1, B2, B4, B5, C2, C4).



# Appendix 2 – Macro to analyse blind marks for each performance

```
Sub Macro5()  
,  
' Macro5 Macro  
,  
,  
  
Columns("E:E").Select  
Selection.Copy  
Sheets.Add After:=ActiveSheet  
Selection.PasteSpecial Paste:=xlPasteValues, Operation:=xlNone, SkipBlanks _  
:=False, Transpose:=False  
Range("B1").Select  
Application.CutCopyMode = False  
ActiveCell.FormulaR1C1 = "Trim"  
Range("B2").Select  
ActiveCell.FormulaR1C1 = "=trim"  
Range("B2").Select  
ActiveCell.FormulaR1C1 = "=TRIM(RC[-1])"  
Range("B2").Select  
Selection.AutoFill Destination:=Range("B2:B" & Range("A" &  
Rows.Count).End(xlUp).Row)  
Range("B2:B8").Select  
Range("D1").Select  
ActiveCell.FormulaR1C1 = "Score"  
Range("E1").Select  
ActiveCell.FormulaR1C1 = "Count"  
Range("D2").Select  
ActiveCell.FormulaR1C1 = "1"  
Range("E2").Select  
ActiveCell.FormulaR1C1 = "=COUNTIF(C[-3],RC[-1])"  
Range("D2").Select  
Selection.DataSeries Rowcol:=xlColumns, Type:=xlLinear, Date:=xlDay, _  
Step:=1, Stop:=100, Trend:=False  
Range("E2").Select  
Selection.AutoFill Destination:=Range("E2:E101")  
Range("E2:E101").Select  
Range("D2").Select  
Sheets.Add  
ActiveWorkbook.PivotCaches.Create(SourceType:=xlDatabase, SourceData:= _  
"Sheet2!R1C4:R101C5", Version:=xlPivotTableVersion15).CreatePivotTable _  
TableDestination:="Sheet3!R3C1", TableName:="PivotTable12", DefaultVersion _  
:=xlPivotTableVersion15  
Sheets("Sheet3").Select  
Cells(3, 1).Select  
With ActiveSheet.PivotTables("PivotTable12").PivotFields("Score")
```



```
.Orientation = xlRowField
.Position = 1
End With
ActiveSheet.PivotTables("PivotTable12").AddDataField ActiveSheet.PivotTables(_
    "PivotTable12").PivotFields("Count"), "Sum of Count", xlSum
ActiveSheet.Shapes.AddChart2(201, xlLine).Select
ActiveChart.SetSourceData Source:=Range("Sheet3!$A$3:$B$104")
ActiveSheet.Shapes("Chart 1").ScaleWidth 1.1354166667, msoFalse, _
    msoScaleFromBottomRight
ActiveSheet.Shapes("Chart 1").ScaleHeight 1.2586803733, msoFalse, _
    msoScaleFromBottomRight
ActiveSheet.Shapes("Chart 1").ScaleWidth 1.3963302752, msoFalse, _
    msoScaleFromTopLeft
ActiveSheet.Shapes("Chart 1").ScaleHeight 1.1420691309, msoFalse, _
    msoScaleFromTopLeft
Range("A5").Select
Selection.Group Start:=True, End:=True, By:=5
End Sub
```

# Appendix 3 – Pre and post workshop questionnaires

## Pre workshop research questionnaire

Please note that in agreeing to complete this questionnaire, you are giving permission for the event organisers to use this anonymised data for research purposes. No names or institutions are recorded. Please answer the following questions:

1. Are you representing:

A UK Conservatoire	
A University Music department/ programme	
As an independent examiner	

2. Are you/ have you been an external examiner?

	How many years approx.	How many appointments
Yes		
No	n/a	n/a

3. Have you had any specific training for marking musical performance

Yes	
No	

4. How well prepared do you feel for marking musical performance.

(1 not at all – 5 very well)

1	2	3	4	5

Please give details on your training/ preparation for marking musical performance

5. How confident are you in your capacity to make judgements about musical performance that are consistent with your peers?

(5 for very confident, 1 for not at all confident)

1	2	3	4	5

Comments on your response

6. How confident are you that standards for assessing musical performance are comparable across all conservatoires and university music departments?

(5 for very confident, 1 for not at all confident)

1	2	3	4	5

Comments on your response

7. To what extent do you think students have confidence in the marking of musical performance,

(5 for very confident, 1 for not at all confident)

1	2	3	4	5

Comments on your response

## Post-event evaluation and research questionnaire

Please note that in agreeing to complete this questionnaire, you are giving permission for Conservatoire UK to use this anonymised data for research purposes. No names or institutions are recorded. Please answer the following questions:

1. Are you representing:

A UK Conservatoire	
A University Music department/ programme	
As an independent examiner	

2. Are you/ have you been an external examiner?

Yes	No

3. To what extent have you found today's event useful for marking musical performance

1	2	3	4	5

Please give details

4. How well prepared do you feel for marking musical performance? 1 very well, 5 not at all.

1	2	3	4	5

Comments on your response

5. How confident are you in your capacity to make judgements about musical performance that are consistent with your peers in your own and other institutions?  
1 for very confident, 5 for not at all confident

1	2	3	4	5

Comments on your response

6. Have you any further suggestions for ensuring the consistency of marking standards across UK musical higher education?
7. Do you think there is value in repeating today's event, but focusing on other elements of musical education?

Yes	No

Further detail:

8. Have you any further comments about today's event