

**ncma**nelson centre
of musical arts

Scholarship Competitions 2026

Saturday 29th August

COMPOSITION MARKING CRITERIA

COMPOSITIONAL TECHNIQUES (20)	COMMUNICATION OF INTENT (20)	PERFORMANCE (20)
Honours (54/60 marks)		
Highly adept with a broad range of compositional techniques*. An inventive, idiomatic use of the medium**. Accurate and sophisticated combination of musical elements*** accurately. Musical ideas develop in an exciting way. (18-20 marks)	Original ideas are imaginative and wholly believable, communicating the desired effect clearly. Musical elements are used skilfully to express the title or intent of the work. An impressive response with effectively communicated content. (18-20 marks)	Convincing communication of the composer's intention through performance. A considered use of articulation, phrasing and dynamics which adds to the meaning of the performance. (18-20 marks)
Distinction (48/60 marks)		
Secure control of a range of compositional techniques. A mostly idiomatic use of the medium. Good use of the musical elements in combination with an interesting development of ideas. (16-17 marks)	Original ideas show creativity and convincingly add meaning to the work. Musical elements are used to express the title or intent with impact and meaning. A strong piece that communicates meaning. (16-17 marks)	Secure communication of the composer's intention through performance. Secure use of articulation, phrasing and dynamics to convey meaning. (16-17 marks)
Merit (42/60)		
Moderate control of compositional techniques. The writing is mostly idiomatic, though some awkwardness may exist in places. Some use of musical elements in combination with some development of ideas. (14-15 marks)	A successful response that mostly communicates the intention of the composition. Musical elements are used in a more limited way, but still convey meaning. Some communication of emotion, though this may lack clarity. (14-15 marks)	Moderately secure communication of the composer's intention through performance. Some use of articulation, phrasing, and dynamics where appropriate. (14-15 marks)
Pass (36/60 marks)		
Limited evidence of compositional techniques. Instrumental writing is awkward or limiting. Elements of music are only briefly explored. Ideas are stated and repeated but would benefit from further development. (12-13 marks)	Limited response that is partially unclear in its communication. Demonstrates basic understanding of musical elements to convey meaning. Occasionally ideas are hard to remember and communication can be confusing in places. (12-13 marks)	Limited communication of the composer's intention. Limited use of articulation, phrasing and dynamics to add vibrancy. Awkwardness in notation and composition may cause challenges. (12-13 marks)
Fail (below 36 marks)		
The composition lacks some understanding of the elements and compositional devices needed to communicate ideas effectively. (0-11 marks)	The work is hard to follow and the meaning of the piece is unclear or confusing. Little evidence of musical elements being used for communication. (0-11 marks)	The performance is hard to follow and lacks structure. Awkwardness in writing makes the piece hard to play. (0-11 marks)

* Compositional techniques may include some of the following: repetition, variation, contrast, call and response, sequencing, cadences, counterpoint, ostinato, modulation, polyphony, homophony, canon, through-composition, and program music and other musical structures.

** Medium refers to the group of instruments being used.

*** Musical elements may include melody, harmony, rhythm, dynamics, timbre, texture, form, and expression.