

Assessment Specifications

Level 1 Music 2026

Published in October 2025

General information

Domain:	Making Music and Music Studies
Standards:	91950, 91951
Assessment method:	Digitally submitted portfolio
Assessment medium:	Digital submission

[Music subject page](#)

[National secondary examinations timetable](#)

Information relating to all achievement standards

Information for candidates and schools on the NZQA digital submission portal is available on the NZQA website: [Digital submission](#)

Conditions of assessment

The use of chatbots, generative AI, paraphrasing tools, or other tools that can automatically generate content is not permitted and material generated by these tools should not be submitted as part of the candidate's work.

Authenticity

Teachers must closely supervise the process of evidence collection to ensure that candidates:

- do not copy from another person or source without appropriate acknowledgement
- do not receive guidance, scaffolding, instruction, assistance, or assessment conditions beyond what is specified as permissible in these Assessment Specifications.

Where a teacher cannot verify that the assessment submitted is the authentic work of the candidate, they must notify NZQA of a possible Candidate Breach of External Assessment.

Special assessment conditions

Refer to the NZQA website for further information:

Specific information for individual achievement standards

Standard:	91950
Title:	Demonstrate understanding of music in relation to contexts
Version:	4
Number of credits:	5
Assessment method:	Digitally submitted portfolio
Final date for submission:	28 October 2026

Candidates are required to submit a portfolio in which they present evidence of their understanding of the following:

1. a Māori music context
2. an additional music context

Candidates must present evidence that meets the standard for EACH context selected. This should include:

- describing musical concepts that are significant to the selected music
- describing contexts that are relevant to the music
- explaining the relationships between the music concepts and the contexts
- discussing the significance of the contexts in relation to the music and drawing conclusions
- using specific musical examples.

Candidate evidence may include spoken or written explanations, annotated scores, video, screencasts or sound files. It must include audio files of the music for the markers to refer to.

Refer to the explanatory notes of the standard for suggested concepts and contexts which could be discussed.

Candidates are required to gather evidence towards the standard during the year and then select and curate their best evidence to submit in their portfolio that meets the standard requirements.

Conditions of assessment

The material submitted for assessment must be the candidate's own work.

Teacher involvement in the candidate's curation of their portfolio for submission is limited to ensuring that:

- the music selected is appropriate for level 6 of the curriculum, with sufficient complexity to allow candidates to meet the criteria at every level of achievement for this standard
- the music selected for the portfolio has not been taught in class
- the candidate has not worked on curating their portfolio outside of class time
- no further guidance, advice or direction is provided to candidates once they begin to curate their portfolio, however teachers may provide recordings / audio files and lead sheets or scores where appropriate.

Submission requirements

Evidence in the portfolio should not exceed 1200 written words or four minutes of speaking. Assessment will be based on the quality of the response rather than its length.

Evidence may be submitted as either:

- a document file (PDF) with accompanying audio files (MP3)
- a slideshow (PPTX) with THREE slides.

If the evidence is submitted as a slideshow, the candidate may present an oral report as an embedded audio file (MP3, WMA) or video file (AVI, M4V, MP4, MOV, WEBM) within the slideshow. In this case, the oral report should not exceed four minutes in duration.

The submission (document file or slideshow) must be entirely self-contained – it must not include links to content outside of the submission (e.g. a link that takes the assessor to a YouTube video or a file in Google Drive). Any such linked content will be excluded from assessment.

Suggested slideshow structure

Section 1 (slide 1)	Candidate NSN Audio or video files of the selected music
Section 2 (slide 2)	Māori context
Section 3 (slide 3)	Additional context

Standard:	91951
Title:	Making Music
Version:	4
Number of credits:	5
Assessment method:	Digitally submitted portfolio
Final date for submission:	28 October 2026

Candidates are required to produce a digital portfolio that demonstrates they can shape music ideas to create an original composition.

The portfolio will consist of THREE artefacts:

- a recording of a completed piece of original music
- a stylistically appropriate visual representation of the music
- a short descriptive statement on how the music was created.

Candidates must submit a short descriptive statement as supporting evidence, where they can identify the intent of the composition, possibly with reference to the creative process, music concepts used, and the overall structure of the piece. This is not marked but assists markers in making their judgement, particularly for group compositions.

Conditions of assessment

Teacher involvement in candidates' production of work for submission is limited to:

- ensuring that there is a suitable creative brief
- conferring with individual students during composing of the music
- teacher observation and teacher / student conferencing to verify individual students' contributions to the composition of the music
- supporting the student to use questioning and self-reflection skills
- conferencing with the student and supporting them to reflect on progress and use this to inform their next steps.

Submission requirements

To provide sufficient evidence for assessment, the piece of original music should be between 2 and 3 minutes in duration.

Candidates can create music individually or as part of a small group. If the piece is a group composition, the candidate must indicate their individual contribution in a way that allows the assessor to clearly and unambiguously identify it.

The recording of the original music must be submitted as an audio file (MP3) or video file (MP4).

The visual representation must be in a format that allows the assessor to clearly understand either the creative process by which it was produced, or how it could be recreated by others. Examples of appropriate representation are annotated screen shots of a DAW file, a fully notated score, or a lead sheet with melody, chords and lyrics.

The candidate's descriptive statement can be presented either in writing or orally. It should be no longer than 200 words. If the candidate's piece is a group composition, the statement must be the candidate's own unique work (not copied by all group members).

The visual representation and report must be submitted as a document file (PDF) and / or audio file (MP3) and / or video file (MP4), as appropriate.

Note that only the specified file types may be submitted, and other file types may not be able to be marked.

Please also refer to the explanatory notes in AS 91951.
