

There is no secret to success in performance. It relies on regular effective practice.

- Choose pieces as soon as possible
- Practice regularly
- Perform and record at every opportunity
- Scan your sheet music every time you record a performance (there are apps for your phone) and send it to your teacher by email.
- Check that you have at least four minutes of performance.
- Check that your ensemble is appropriate – there is a flow chart on the Eduqas website.

Plan as early as possible what you are going to perform. You can only use recordings from the school year in which you are going to sit the exam (Usually Year 11) but take opportunities whenever possible to be recorded. Listen back and ask other people for feedback. Assess your own performances using the criteria you can find in Appendix A of the specification, on the Eduqas website.

You can only get marks for the evidence in your recordings. They are awarded in three areas:

1. Accuracy – this means playing the right notes, at the right time, but also following all the other performance directions, such as dynamics, tempo markings, articulation etc. If your piece does not contain any dynamic markings, work with your teacher to add some in so the evidence is there that you can follow them correctly. Your accuracy is judged by comparing what you play to the sheet music or lead sheet, so make sure that if you intend to do something different it is clearly marked on. This could be for example an altered melody line in the second verse of a song, a section which is cut out or repeated, or an ornament in a piece of Baroque music. If you are submitting a lead sheet it must contain enough detail for your teacher to judge the accuracy. If you are a singer if it not enough just to submit the lyrics – you need the melody line too.

2. Technical control – this means how well you control your instrument or voice, and could include breath control, intonation, co-ordination, tone quality, use of the bow, finger dexterity, projection etc, as appropriate. The standard level for Eduqas GCSE is equivalent to Grade 3, so this is the level of technique which is appropriate. Think about the specific techniques which are used on your instrument and in your pieces and practise to get them right.

3. Expression and interpretation – this is how well you communicate in your performance. It includes playing in time and in a balance with other people in an ensemble, or an accompanist, as well as how you communicate the style of the music. For example a rock song is not expected to be sung in the same style as a baroque song. Think about the pieces you have chosen. Have you mastered them well enough to be able to communicate them to the audience? If you are singing, are you conveying the mood or meaning of the lyrics?

Finally, it is essential that you time your performances. If they are under four minutes in total you will face a penalty and lose marks.